



JOHN W. GARRETT

and the

• BALTIMORE •

&

• OHIO •

RAILROAD

KATHLEEN WATERS SANDER



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JOHN W. GARRETT
and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad

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AND THE
BALTIMORE & OHIO
RAILROAD

Kathleen Waters Sander

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*As always, for John, Libby, and now Brock
who make everything possible
and
For Courtney B. Wilson
who has shared every step of my B&O journey*

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The entire history of the road could be divided into three main epochs:
before Garrett, Garrett, and after Garrett.

EDWARD HUNGERFORD

The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927

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JOHN W. GARRETT
and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad

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PROLOGUE

Taking Hold of the Throttle

IN THE FALL of 1858, the election of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad president hung like the sword of Damocles over the boardroom and Baltimore. The company teetered on the financial edge, with doubts about its ability to survive amid fierce competition and the lingering effects of the Panic of 1857. Thirty years earlier, the B&O had started as a modest attempt to keep up with transportation rivals in New York by putting a freight wagon on iron tracks and pulling it with a horse. The company's name expressed the founders' hopes to eventually connect Baltimore to the Ohio River, an unprecedented and optimistic goal for an unproven mode of transport. The young company—the country's first chartered railroad—faced unforeseen challenges in its first decades. Constructing the line over the Allegheny Mountains, raising capital for expansion, and updating obsolete equipment continued to drain the coffers. Despite all odds, Baltimore's transportation experiment not only proved itself, but became a model for American railroading. In 1835, the *American Railroad Journal and Advocate for Internal Improvements* cited the B&O as the “rail road university of the United States” for “its candid, business-like liberal manner, in which they annually lay out before the world the result of their experience.”¹

But much had changed over three decades. Maryland had become economically dependent on the B&O as its commercial lifeline to important markets in the expanding nation, and now aggressive rivals threatened that prosperity. The B&O needed a strong president to take charge at this perilous moment in the company's history. Longtime B&O board member and Baltimore financier Johns Hopkins did not need to look far for the right candidate. He nominated 38-year-old John W. Garrett, a fellow B&O director and a respected businessman from a well-established Baltimore mercantile family. After a contentious vote and by a slim margin, on November 17, 1858, the Board of Directors elected Garrett as the company's seventh president. “From this moment, the stockholders of the B&O Railroad had but one aim,” a commentator later noted of Garrett's corporate coup, “and it was to induce

Mr. Garrett to take hold of the throttle and henceforth guide the great machine in its onward course.”²

With a short, no-frills acceptance speech reaffirming his dedication to the company, Garrett began an extraordinary run as a railroad president. In an era when many company presidents were lucky to last two to three years before being ousted by their boards and stockholders, Garrett’s reign at the B&O would stretch over the next twenty-six years, the longest yet in the company’s history and among the longest for any railroad. The story of the B&O would henceforth be written as “before Garrett, Garrett, and after Garrett.”³

Garrett’s life and that of the B&O interweave through much of nineteenth-century transportation and commerce, as well as during the Civil War. It might be said that destiny, and certainly proximity, brought them together. They grew up just a few miles apart, in downtown Baltimore. Garrett was born in 1820 and the B&O was chartered seven years later. Garrett’s father, Robert, a successful merchant always looking for improved transportation to his markets in the Ohio Basin, took an early interest in the fledgling B&O. The Garretts’ and the B&O’s ties irrevocably converged through the 1840s and 1850s, as Robert Garrett’s company helped the chronically cash-strapped B&O by raising critical funding for its race with competitors to get to the lucrative hinterlands beyond the Alleghenies.

John Garrett came of age as the antebellum years witnessed spectacular innovations. Technological inventions sprang up so quickly that they could hardly be counted. In 1830, New York-based inventor Peter Cooper designed and built the country’s first steam locomotive especially for the B&O. This diminutive engine, the “Tom Thumb,” revolutionized railroading and industry. On May 24, 1844, Samuel F. B. Morse, a frustrated artist turned inventor, transmitted the first electrical telegram, using wires strung along the B&O tracks from the US Supreme Court chamber in Washington, DC, to the B&O’s Mount Clare Shops in Maryland. Morse’s telegraph changed communications and opened the door for a multiplicity of inventions that followed. And the mighty railroads dominated as the engines that drove modern finance, technology, construction, and management.⁴

Garrett stepped into the B&O presidency at a critical moment during the expansive and formative 1850s for American railroads, the industry’s “lusty adolescence”—with all the troubling traits the age often implies: rapid physical growth, angst, insecurity, jockeying for power, and questionable behavior.⁵ By that time, the B&O ranked as one of the country’s largest employers and, as importantly, among the “Big Four”—the nation’s preeminent railroads.

Garrett had just hit his stride in his railroad presidency when the Civil War erupted. The war shaped Garrett, as it did most Americans. Living in a slave state,

a slave owner himself, and raised as a Southern Democrat, Garrett at first was suspected of being a Southern sympathizer. But he soon revealed complete loyalty to President Abraham Lincoln and the Union by making the B&O available for troop and supply transport to critical battles. Through the four years of war he conferred daily with military officials, earning the confidence of Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton.

The B&O's route system, straddling the North and the South and running through both the Union state of Maryland and Confederate Virginia, destined the road as a primary target of Confederate destruction and, ultimately, a leader in the Union victory. The B&O became the war's first front—the Confederate's first combat objective.⁶ Garrett withstood Generals Robert E. Lee's and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's unrelenting destruction of essential B&O rail lines and equipment. The Confederates attacked the B&O 143 times, often with overwhelming localized devastation.⁷ But they did not put the B&O out of business. The B&O earned the well-deserved moniker "Mr. Lincoln's Road" for its valuable service to the Union.

After the war, Garrett took his place among the first generation of tycoons who would dominate the Gilded Age. The new world order of postwar railroading, with its fierce competition and one-upmanship, required Garrett to adopt different administrative structures and techniques. His postwar presidency revealed glimpses of brilliance—his true vision for the B&O. But rivalries—new and old, personal and professional—and deteriorating mental and physical health often propelled him into irrational and costly projects. Nonetheless, many of his postwar ventures soared, pushing the B&O forward in track mileage and notable enterprises, including extending B&O rail lines to critical commercial markets, rebuilding Baltimore's status as a leading East Coast port, and developing a successful tourism trade in the Western Maryland county named in his honor.

Fortunately, for all of us, a namesake county remains to honor John W. Garrett, since his important place in railroading and his notable life's story are often subsumed by the larger history of the famed Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. I first came across the fascinating figure of John W. Garrett while writing a biography of his daughter, *Mary Elizabeth Garrett: Society and Philanthropy in the Gilded Age*, published in 2008. I became so intrigued by John Garrett that, for a while, I contemplated writing a dual biography of the father and his daughter and their complex, forceful relationship. Garrett very much admired his capable—but unheralded—daughter. In turn, Garrett became the greatest influence in his daughter's life. I eventually decided to write about Mary Elizabeth Garrett's feminist activism and philanthropy, and John Garrett's story remained largely untold. But the temptation to write about him and his presidency of the B&O Railroad persisted.

Robert J. Brugger, editor emeritus of the Johns Hopkins University Press, and Courtney B. Wilson, executive director of the B&O Railroad Museum, came up with the answer. They suggested revisiting William Bruce Catton's brilliant 1959 doctoral dissertation, "John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio."⁸ Much to the regret of railroad enthusiasts, Catton's extensive research remains a singular, but unpublished, study of Garrett and the railroad he presided over. After reading Catton's 593-page opus, I grew even more captivated by Garrett's influence on nineteenth-century railroading, commerce, and the Civil War. Catton's research served as the inspiration to once again examine John W. Garrett's life and bring his story to a wider audience.

The details of Garrett's professional and civic life and his national influence are revealed through the voluminous Garrett papers at the B&O Railroad Museum, the Library of Congress, the Maryland Historical Society, the Archives Center in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, and related manuscript collections and secondary sources. Garrett's place in railroading and social history has been relegated largely to encyclopedia entries or newspaper accounts. But the private John W. Garrett proved to be much harder to uncover and explain. Despite the power Garrett wielded during his lifetime—the *New York Times* asserted, "No one could conclude a business deal from New York to Washington without his approval"⁹—we know little about his personal thoughts. Most of what we know of his private life, particularly as an adult, comes from scattered family records and recollections by others. Always intent on promoting himself with an untarnished public image by carefully controlling publicity, he remained a very private man, leaving few personal records or letters.

Researching John W. Garrett was a more challenging and quite different endeavor from writing about the life of his daughter. Mary Elizabeth Garrett never missed an opportunity to jot down her innermost thoughts, her philosophies, her joys, and her disappointments. She often wrote a half dozen letters a day and received almost as many. As with similar women of her generation and background, Mary kept journals, ledgers of letters and gifts given and received, and treasured family mementoes. Barely a blank piece of paper slipped from her grasp without containing a personal confession or reflection. The extensive collection of her personal letters and memorabilia is housed in the Canady Library at Bryn Mawr College. Such an abundant archive allowed me to dig deep into Mary's life. It was possible to explore, through her own words, her various stages as she matured; her struggles, relationships, victories, and frustrations; and her motivations to become a great philanthropist and reformer.

During Mary's adolescence and early adulthood after the Civil War, a strong, separate women's culture developed, particularly among middle- and upper-class women. While women pushed into the public sphere through their civic and re-

form efforts to improve their communities and their own place in society, they simultaneously created a parallel world through their separate, very private women's activities. As Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, a trailblazer in women's history, wrote in *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America*, the letters and diaries of these women, such as the many Mary Garrett left behind, "revealed the existence of a female world of great emotional strength and complexity. . . . Uniquely female rituals drew women together during every stage of their lives [as] women revealed their deepest feelings to one another. . . . It was a world in which men made only a shadowy appearance."¹⁰

Unlike his daughter, John Garrett did not leave a copious paper trail of introspection. His personal story remains more elusive. Nowadays, in our confessional age of public, indeed, worldwide, self-expression and communication, Garrett's restraint seems guarded and protective. The very public, masculine sphere in which Garrett came of age and later prospered did not allow for such expressions of vulnerability or self-examination. "Few biographies of men highlight gender issues in men's lives. They generally focus on a man's preparedness for and fulfillment of his life course in the public arena," Sara Alpern and colleagues explain in *The Challenge of Feminist Biography*. We rarely find "the tensions men often feel, but seldom publicly acknowledge between their private and public selves."¹¹

Such is the case with John W. Garrett—"a man of vast powers and abilities," the *Baltimore Sun* noted—who carefully shielded his next moves and personal feelings.¹² The archetypes of Manifest Destiny, the self-made man, the larger-than-life politician and industrialist, and the Gilded Age tycoon ruled Garrett's world. "Capitalism came of age and entrepreneurship became the model of American identity," Scott A. Sandage wrote in *Born Losers: A History of Failure in America*. The "go-ahead principle"—pushing ahead and never showing personal weaknesses or self-doubt—defined the nineteenth-century male success story, of which Garrett was very much a part.¹³

His Civil War documents exemplify the difficulty in getting to the heart of the private John W. Garrett. Unlike many of his friends, colleagues, and family, who openly espoused or eschewed opinions on the Civil War, Garrett kept his personal feelings about the conflict private. Aside from venting his anger over the Confederates' unrelenting destruction of the B&O's rail lines and equipment, Garrett did not disclose his intimate thoughts on the death and devastation the war brought to most American families, including his own. He did not comment on the pro-Southern activities of his brother and son, or the divisiveness within his beloved Baltimore, or the assassination of the commander-in-chief with whom he worked closely to achieve a Union victory. Perhaps not surprisingly, the only insight we have into Garrett's personal anguish during this time comes from his daughter's memoir.¹⁴ Garrett was all business, playing an administrative role in the war: to keep the B&O running

and at the service of the Union. The documents detailing his presidency of the railroad—his words in the company's *Annual Reports*, the B&O Board of Directors' minute books, and correspondence—demonstrate the same reluctance for private commentary.

After the war, Garrett expressed an interest in writing a memoir. He did not—and we are left to wonder why. Did he have second thoughts about revealing too much? Would he have been compelled to divulge personal thoughts? Were there aspects of his life that he felt should be left unexamined? Such a document would have provided more insight into this intriguing man.

Garrett's life's story and his presidency of the B&O Railroad cannot be told or understood without beginning with the context of the earliest influences on his life, the nation's primitive commerce and transportation systems in the early nineteenth century; then continuing through the B&O's integral efforts during the Civil War; and detailing Garrett's successful and often controversial presidency of one of the nation's first major corporations. Part One examines Garrett's immigrant father's rise from a humble western trading merchant hauling goods on the National Road to an international financier; John Garrett's early training in the nascent trade and unsophisticated transportation systems of the antebellum years in the family business; the Garretts' early financial support of the B&O and other American railroads; John Garrett's election as B&O president in 1858; the first years of his railroad presidency and the heated rate wars with competitors; and the fracturing of the nation. Part Two covers the B&O's critical role in the Civil War; Garrett's relationship with Lincoln, Stanton, and military leaders in strategizing Union troop movements; the relentless Confederate destruction of the B&O in the first years of the war; the great troop movement of 1863; and the Battle of Monocacy Junction. Part Three investigates Garrett's postwar initiatives to continue the B&O's push to the critical markets of Pittsburgh and Chicago and his struggles to get to the South and to New York; his entrepreneurial efforts to develop tourism in Western Maryland and to revive Baltimore's postwar economic slump; his ongoing battles with labor and his one-upmanship with competitors; his luxurious lifestyle at his many estates; his effort to create Garrett dynasties at the B&O and Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated; and, finally, his failing health and death.

At its heart, Garrett's life and his presidency of the B&O represent an epic chronicle of the transformation of an expanding nation on the move, from rudimentary commerce and primitive transportation westward by wagon or horseback over dirt roads to the undisputed dominance of the mighty railroads and, not least, the clashing of oversized egos and opulent lifestyles of the Gilded Age moguls as they laid the foundation of the new industrial nation.

Part One

TO THE WEST

1790-1861

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The Whole Population Is in Motion

1790–1828

A FESTIVE CROWD of 60,000, three-fourths of Baltimore, gathered downtown at the Merchants' Exchange Building early on a bright and cool July Fourth in 1828, eager for a "grand civic procession" and celebration on a scale never before seen in the Chesapeake Bay port city. At 7:00 a.m. sharp, a three-gun salute signaled the start of the parade. Bands smartly marched to two specially composed tunes: "The Railroad March" and "The Carrollton March." Everyone clamored to get a glimpse of the flamboyant floats made by Baltimoreans of every stripe. Organizations and guilds of glass cutters, ship builders, tin plate workers, draymen, cedar coopers, rope makers, and a host of other tradesmen marched with military regiments, volunteer groups, and Freemasons—all resplendent in their uniforms and attire befitting their professions and stature. Politicians and visitors from near and far joined the jollity. The numbers swelled as revelers sprinted alongside the 2.5-mile parade route, arriving four hours later at Mount Clare, the hickory tree-lined estate of one member of Maryland's patrician Carroll family.¹

The special day not only celebrated the nation's fifty-second birthday and the centennial of Baltimore's founding, but an Independence Day of a different sort: a transportation independence that might free business-minded Baltimore—and the nation—from obsolete, slow-moving, and unprofitable modes of commerce like sailing ships and packhorses. Baltimoreans eagerly anticipated showing off an invention that would keep their prosperous city commercially competitive with its ambitious rival to the north, New York. Baltimore's plan seemed at first glance to be so simplistic as to be almost laughable: a "rail road"—a wagon set on parallel iron tracks and pulled by a horse. The idea seemed audacious, risky, and, many said, too impracticable to keep Baltimore in the running.

Despite the naysayers, the crowd erupted in cheers as one of the nation's most revered statesmen, 90-year-old Baltimorean Charles Carroll of Carrollton, the only surviving signer of the Declaration of Independence a half century earlier, vigorously

turned the first spade of dirt to set the cornerstone of the new “Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road Company” in place. As one of the earliest and strongest proponents of constructing a railroad from Baltimore across the Allegheny Mountains and out to the Ohio River, Carroll stated, “I consider this to be among the most important acts of my life, second only to signing the Declaration of Independence, if even second to that.” He noted the significance of the day: “The result of our labours will be felt not only by ourselves, but by posterity—not only by Baltimore, but also by Maryland and the United States.”² Much like the signing of the revolutionary Declaration of Independence, in 1828 Baltimore, too, ignited a revolution, this one in transportation, that soon would launch an exuberant era of commerce and westward expansion. Baltimore’s *Niles’ Weekly Register* captured the excitement of the day: “Independence. Independence. Independence was shewn in every movement.”³

Robert and Elizabeth Garrett joined the merry-makers with their sons—Henry Stouffer, age 10, and John Work, age 8—and 1-year-old daughter, Elizabeth Barbara. Robert Garrett, a once-penniless Irish immigrant who had risen to Baltimore’s elite mercantile class, already had taken an early interest in the railroad. For nearly three decades, Robert had made his fortune hauling goods westward over the Allegheny Mountains by packhorse and Conestoga wagons, awkward and time-consuming modes of transportation. Like most Baltimore merchants and financiers, Robert hoped to find a new and better way to ensure his future prosperity and that of his adopted city.

For 45-year-old Robert, the two-mile carriage ride from the family’s home on Fayette Street in downtown Baltimore to the Carroll estate that July morning represented yet another step forward in a long, difficult, but ultimately rewarding journey that had started thirty-eight years earlier in Belfast, Northern Ireland. At age 7, in 1790, Robert had embarked with his parents, John and Margaret MacMechen Garrett, and his five siblings aboard the brig *Brothers* to make the perilous fifty-day North Atlantic crossing to America. The new country, far to the west and an ocean away from poverty-stricken County Down, promised so much. The *Brothers* sailed toward opportunity and new possibilities in the recently formed United States. The Garretts had high hopes: “to remove to America wither they had been preceded by many of their friends.”⁴ But Robert’s 40-year-old father did not live to realize that dream. “The hand of disease rested on the patriarch of the band after but a few hours of severe illness,” Captain James Jefferis wrote in the ship’s log of the sudden death of Robert’s father.⁵ Young Robert and his family watched as the body of their husband and father slid into the frigid Atlantic Ocean.

John Garrett’s untimely death did not deter the family; they already knew adversity and hardship. They were sturdy Scots Irish, accustomed to leaving oppression and disappointment to find brighter prospects, and were willing to take the risks.

For many such immigrants, those opportunities would be found in America. “The seed of ambition had been well planted on Ulster soil; it was to bear fruit in America,” a commentator noted.⁶ The Garretts numbered among the hundreds of thousands of Ulster Scots who fled Ireland in the eighteenth century, arriving in bustling East Coast ports and fanning across the eastern fringes of the United States.

After disembarking in Wilmington, Delaware, the 29-year-old widow, Margaret Garrett, and her six children traveled to Baltimore, where established immigrant friends advised her to move to the rich farming land of neighboring Pennsylvania.⁷ She did, buying land adjacent to her brother-in-law Andrew Garrett’s farm in Cumberland County, near Harrisburg. By most standards, Andrew Garrett, who had immigrated in 1784, had become a successful farmer, counting a horse and two cows among his possessions. Settlers who could not afford the steep land prices in Pennsylvania typically followed the Great Wagon Road southwest through the Cumberland Valley and headed west to settle the southernmost Ohio country, the Shenandoah Valley, and Piedmont Carolina. By the late eighteenth century, the Harrisburg region hummed with 36,000 industrious settlers, mostly Germans and Scots Irish.⁸ The great, sweeping valley offered rich soil for farming, rushing rivers—the wide Susquehanna bisected the region—and an endless horizon of rolling hills, reminiscent of Ireland. Footpaths and rudimentary wagon roads, layered upon ancient Indian trails, crisscrossed the valley, creating hubs of commerce and connecting scattered villages. A few miles away in Lancaster County lay the Conestoga River, from which the great lumbering wagons that dominated American transportation and westward migration got their name.

By the time the Garretts immigrated, the country that would provide Robert Garrett with abundant opportunities was taking form, albeit in fits and starts. The new nation already stretched 1,200 miles from Maine to Georgia, with settlers pressing westward by the day. The nation’s laws were still being written—the US Constitution was in the process of being ratified by the states, and a Bill of Rights would soon be approved—but its full potential and future remained unknown. The first federal census was taken the year the Garretts arrived. In 1790, four million people lived in the United States, mostly in rural areas within a couple of hundred miles of the East Coast; only one in twenty lived in areas containing 2,500 or more. The average household counted six people; the Garretts had slightly above this figure, with seven members.⁹ The population of the young country was itself very young and more robust than that of Europe; many observers commented on the large number of children.

Villages popped up seemingly overnight as settlers pushed back the frontier. Churches, stores, and taverns and inns for weary travelers dotted the dusty roads between hamlets. Most people either walked to their destinations or rode, if they

were lucky enough to own a horse. New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, and Charleston, South Carolina, ranked as the largest, wealthiest cities. Commerce was rudimentary and personal, with bartering for goods being an acceptable payment for services. States and municipalities had not yet adopted a uniform monetary system; silver and gold specie served as currency. No large national businesses yet existed, although banking, shipping, and insurance companies were expanding.

Margaret Garrett took well to the land and “cultivated the farm successfully,” instilling in her children—certainly Robert Garrett—the value of hard work and perseverance.¹⁰ By 1798, she felt the need to pack up the family and move west to the small hamlet of West Middletown, in Washington County in western Pennsylvania.¹¹ A few decades earlier, settlers had been reluctant to venture so far west when Indians were bitterly resisting European encroachment. But by the end of the eighteenth century, after the Indian fighting had subsided, many settlers began populating the region, “hacking and hewing their way to the West,” as English writer Frances Trollope noted of the “busy, bustling industrious population” on her visit to America.¹²

West Middletown, known in Robert’s day as West Middle Borough, a village of about 1,500, lay a few miles south of Pittsburgh, a quickly growing commercial hub at the busy confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers, which then formed the Ohio River. Travelers rode sturdy, crowded flatboats down the Ohio River to Cincinnati and on to the Mississippi River while, nearby, a steady stream of foot travelers trekked on a well-worn toll road, heading west to push back the frontier. West Middletown served as an important center for local farmers and community life. Like many villages dotting the western frontier, it boasted a colorful cast of characters with a vast repertoire of spirited adventures. The legendary exploits of his neighbors enthralled young Robert Garrett. David Dodds, a “flatboat man,” was said to have boated the 1,000-mile distance to New Orleans and walked back twenty-three times. Another, David Boyd, a popular town politician, had been carried off by Indians as a child but returned to tell the tale. James Clemens, a forebear of Mark Twain, settled in West Middletown, and his famous relative later stopped by for a visit, as did naturalist John James Audubon. Andrew Ralston, who streamlined the previously awkward threshing machine into a single, efficient process that revolutionized farming, lived in the village. As an important stop on the Underground Railroad, West Middletown was rife with antislavery activism. Reportedly, two slave catchers, flush with a wagon full of runaways, stopped at a local tavern. While they passed the time imbibing, angry abolitionists set the contraband free.¹³

There, on the western Pennsylvania frontier, Robert Garrett encountered a hotbed of political and religious activism. In 1794, local farmers had tested the authority of the new federal government, which had raised excise taxes on their whiskey-producing corn. The county’s namesake, George Washington—in his second term as president—

rode at the head of a 13,000-man militia to suppress the angry rebels, the first and only sitting president to lead troops in the field.¹⁴ Although quickly contained, the Whiskey Rebellion, as it came to be called, provided an early glimpse of the controversies of local sovereignty, states' rights, and the federal government's authority to intervene. These issues would continue to fester and eventually pull the nation into the Civil War. Thomas Campbell, disgruntled with West Middletown's Presbyterians, spun off his own brand of Calvinism, the Campbellites of the Christian Church. Young Robert reveled in the religious diversity of his village and soon became "warmly attached to all the peculiarities of Presbyterianism."¹⁵

Life on a frontier farm could be grueling, unrelenting, and, at times, menacing. Black bears and mountain lions roamed the western Pennsylvania woods. Winters stretched on, long and harsh. Even at a young age, Robert would have had his share of dawn-to-dusk tasks: tending the livestock, helping with the harvest, felling trees, and hauling wood. By the time the family moved to West Middletown, 15-year-old Robert was an experienced shooter and able to handle a sickle and plow. Farm technology slowly improved. As settlers opened up new farmland, their implements—plows, axes, and sickles—were getting lighter, more manageable, and more efficient. Better technology meant higher productivity and greater profits for ambitious settlers.

But Robert showed little interest in farming. Rather, the untapped riches of the land beyond the mountains, the wide-open Northwest Territory—Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, and Indiana—tempted him. It didn't take long for him to set out on his first adventure westward. Like most settlers, the Garretts lived in close proximity with Indians, and Robert soon learned how valuable his neighbors could be. Within a year of moving to West Middletown, he and a brother paddled down the Ohio River, turned west at the Muskingum River, and headed inland to trade with the Shawnee and Delaware tribes in the region that, in 1803, would become the state of Ohio. They wintered in huts with the Indians, bringing back furs and other valuables that they sold through a commercial spider web of towns and villages. These trips to the interior would hold much larger implications than just an immediate livelihood for the Garretts. Robert was learning the lay of the land to the west: the people, the rivers, and, most importantly, the commercial outposts. This knowledge would be invaluable for his future—and the economic future of Baltimore and the yet-to-come Garrett empire.

After such exciting explorations of the wider world, farm life in West Middletown could not contain Robert's ambitions. He soon found employment on the nearby toll road, where life for the 16-year-old proved to be much more eventful and exciting than farming, with travelers coming and going from distantly exotic places. Robert thrived on the mayhem. "The whole population is in motion," a commentator wrote of the young country on the move.¹⁶ But no one moved very quickly, easily—

or safely. Transportation methods had not improved for centuries. Stagecoaches, unaffectionately called “shakeguts” or “turtlebacks” by their jostled passengers, were little more than horse-drawn freight wagons, topped with large boxes crammed with travelers.¹⁷ One hapless journeyer from New York to Cincinnati and back complained that his stagecoach, lumbering precariously over rocky, narrow roads, overturned nine times.¹⁸ At least he lived to tell the tale. Many didn’t. The brightly colored and whimsically named wagons, such as “Ivanhoe” and “Keystone,” belied the rough, sometimes fatal ride.¹⁹ Passenger coaches and freight wagons stocked with precious goods regularly broke down, got bogged down in knee-high mud, broke through flimsy bridges, or tumbled off steep hillsides.

For Robert, those misfortunes provided a livelihood. He hired on with a teamster, Captain Alexander Sharp, “on the wagons,” fixing the steel-rimmed wheels of the wagons that traveled the busy road. Sharp taught his young apprentice about the primitive transportation system: “[Sharp’s] practiced mind saw the advantage of having narrow tread wheels for mild roads and broad tread for the turnpikes.”²⁰ The work could be backbreaking, but Robert obtained an education he could not have gotten in West Middletown. He eagerly took it all in—talking with the travelers, hearing about the land out to the west, and learning the intricacies of the nation’s nascent commerce system. An observer noted that he was honing his “judgment of distances and the best mode of transportation.”²¹ Robert quickly outgrew the job of fixing wagon wheels. Captain Sharp found that the young man showed “an extraordinary capacity for business” and encouraged him to seek his fortunes in Baltimore.²² In 1801, Robert packed up and headed to the fastest-growing city in the country.²³

Baltimore: Bent on the Pursuit of Wealth

It proved to be a good move for Robert—and for Baltimore. “Among all the cities of America, or of the Old World, in modern or ancient times,” a commentator observed, “there is no record of any one which has sprung up so quickly to so high a degree of importance as Baltimore.”²⁴ Located strategically in the middle of the Atlantic seacoast, the busy port city lay a few miles south of the Mason-Dixon line, a geographical and ideological demarcation dividing North and South that was becoming increasingly important and politically volatile. Baltimore, Southern in tradition and attitude and located in a slave state, nonetheless looked to the north, to the west, and abroad for its commercial prosperity. It had been the last of the colonial East Coast port cities to be founded but quickly caught up to its Northern competitors and, by the early nineteenth century, ranked as the third-largest city in the country, bypassing Boston but trailing Philadelphia and New York. Rich farmlands and a natural fall line to power water mills surrounded the city. By 1832, with its sixty

flour mills within twenty miles, Baltimore ranked as the second-largest milling and trade center in the nation.²⁵ Besides its deep harbor that opened to the Chesapeake Bay, the port city's greatest advantage was its location: it lay up to two hundred miles farther inland than its East Coast competitors to the north, making the commercially rich interior markets of the nation that much closer.

Baltimoreans boasted about their city, believing "that their affection for a home brings prosperity to its inhabitants," a visitor noted.²⁶ An established aristocracy, a spirited assortment of religions, a rising middle class, bickering political parties, and ambitious immigrants and wage earners combined with an equal number of slaves and free blacks to give Baltimore a unique character and a lively, if not always harmonious, demographic mix. Seeing slaves for the first time jarred travelers coming from the North, as well as foreign visitors, including Charles Dickens: "The sensation of exacting service from human creatures who are bought and sold . . . is not an enviable one. . . . [Their] presence filled me with a sense of shame and self-reproach."²⁷ Slaves and free laborers worked side by side on the sprawling wharves, in ramshackle warehouses full of goods, in busy mills, and in the houses of the rich. More than three thousand houses—from workers' humble homes to the mansions of the wealthy—wrapped around a bustling harbor. Ships crammed the waters, "coming and going out from the pretty harbor. Beautiful ships, with their hulls coppered," a commentator noted. "Line ships for Liverpool and Amsterdam and Le Havre and Boston and New York and Halifax and Havana and Vera Cruz, the West Indies and the Mediterranean."²⁸ The city gained fame for its "Baltimore Clippers"—sleek, streamlined vessels that could easily sail past their competitors.²⁹ Ten steamship companies competed to crisscross the Chesapeake Bay.

On the west side of the harbor, Fort McHenry stood as a comforting sentinel. Its troops had valiantly defended the city during the twenty-five-hour Battle of Baltimore in the War of 1812 and stopped the British after their rampage through Washington, DC. The sight of the garrison's magnificent flag the next morning inspired Francis Scott Key to pen a poem, which later became the lyrics for "The Star-Spangled Banner." On the opposite side of the harbor, in Fell's Point, workers loaded schooners bound for the Far East with hogsheads of one of Maryland's prime exports, tobacco. Each day, more than 1,700 wagons, carts, and ships brought prized goods to the city. Theaters entertained audiences with lusty comedies, such as *The Lawyer in the Sack* and *The Jealous Husband*. Restaurants and bawdy taverns enticed sailors, travelers, and residents alike. Dance halls featured everything from cotillions to jigs. The tall spires of the city's many churches looked down on the chaotic vitality of the city, inspiring a moral tone. Six local newspapers reported daily on the city's lively mix of mayhem, as well as on the latest fashions. Well-to-do Baltimoreans would have been accustomed to the latest styles and fashionable accouterments imported from around the world.

The city's boundless abundance led one European observer to note, "Baltimoreans collected from all quarters are bent on the pursuit of wealth; to get money honestly, if they can, but at any rate, to get it."³⁰ And Robert Garrett was determined to get it. His Presbyterian connections from West Middletown paid off when he reached Baltimore. Patrick Dinsmore, a leader in Baltimore's Presbyterian community, recognized Robert's knack for business and quickly hired him as a clerk in his commission house. Under Dinsmore's tutelage, Robert furthered his knowledge of commerce and transportation. He acquired and priced goods and packed them for shipment by ocean-going vessels to foreign ports or by wagons and packhorses over the Alleghenies. The young merchant experienced his first taste of the new nation's fickle, unpredictable interplay of economics and politics when Congress passed the Embargo Act of 1807 to halt all exports from the United States to the warring nations of England and France; by the next year, Baltimore's once-lucrative export trade dropped by 80 percent.³¹ Robert made business contacts in all directions: to the west, to the north, and in international markets. He stayed with Dinsmore for four years before forming his own partnership, Wallace and Garrett, where he ran a successful trade business with the hinterlands until 1812.

By then, 29-year-old Robert already was a widower. In 1811, he had married 20-year-old Martha Hanna of Baltimore, who gave birth to a daughter, Sarah Margaret. Martha died the following year. For whatever reason—grief over the loss of his young wife or the need to be nearer to family—Robert returned to West Middletown, where his life took on a frenetic range of activities. Eager to become a leader in his adopted country and not interested in carrying on the family tradition of farming, he served as a justice of the peace in Hopewell Township in Washington County, bought land in nearby Bedford County, and opened a dry goods store with a partner, John D. Work, in West Middletown, where he took out a license to sell wines, spirits, and general merchandise, ordering most of his inventory from Baltimore.³²

Over the next few years, Robert made several trips to and from Baltimore—an arduous 250-mile journey by horseback each way across the mountains—undecided about the right place to settle yet keeping his mercantile contacts up to date. But he had other interests in Baltimore besides business. By 1816 he was love struck. Nineteen-year-old Elizabeth Stouffer, daughter of Henry and Barbara Close Stouffer, had captured his heart. Elizabeth's father—known for his towering seven-foot height—was a well-connected Baltimore city council member and a wealthy merchant who traded with the West Indies. He had married Barbara Close in York, Pennsylvania, in 1782 and moved to Baltimore two years later. The Stouffers predated the Garretts' arrival in the United States. Emigrating from Germany in the mid-eighteenth century, they settled in the hills of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, near to where the widow Margaret Garrett and her six children would settle three decades later. Robert already

knew the Stouffer clan; as a young merchant in West Middletown, he had done business with John and Jacob Stouffer of the western Pennsylvania branch of the family.³³

Robert began an earnest, yearlong campaign to win over the daughter of one of Baltimore's most prominent families. Elizabeth must have found his love letters irresistible. "There is a great want with me which rests with you to fill," he wrote, ending with a romantic poem—and then, in a burst of honesty, added a postscript confessing the verse was not his own creation.³⁴ By February 1817, Elizabeth had succumbed to Robert's lovelorn entreaties and accepted his marriage proposal. He was overjoyed, expressing his "gratitude that we will unite for our mutual welfare and happiness."³⁵ They married in Baltimore on May 19, 1817.

The new Mrs. Garrett reluctantly followed her husband back to West Middletown, leaving lively, cosmopolitan Baltimore and her close-knit, prosperous family for the obscurity and difficult life of a trans-Appalachian village. Elizabeth became the stepmother to 5-year-old Sarah Margaret, although it is unknown if she and Robert took in Robert's child at this point in time.³⁶ Elizabeth gave birth to their first son, Henry Stouffer Garrett, on March 6, 1818, in West Middletown. By the following year, she had persuaded her husband to return to Baltimore, joining an increasing exodus from rural to urban locales in the early nineteenth century. Robert put their house up for rent and advertised in the *Washington County (PA) Reporter* that he "declined business in West Middletown." His business partner, John D. Work, took care of loose ends, settling "all those indebted to Robert Garrett."³⁷

With financial backing from Elizabeth's father, in 1819 Robert established his own commission company, Robert Garrett and Company, paying \$8 on August 1 for a license "to sell dry goods merchandize."³⁸ He continued to trade with the region he knew best, over the Alleghenies and into the Ohio Basin, as he had done with Dinsmore. Robert's new business represented a typical antebellum enterprise, and he handled the full range of commercial tasks related to his company: importer, wholesaler, transporter, accountant, and correspondent.³⁹ He hired two junior partners, James Menzies and a young man named Kimmel, possibly a brother-in-law.⁴⁰ Robert's new company did well in its first year, despite a devastating yellow fever outbreak in Baltimore, competition from equally ambitious merchants, and the Panic of 1819, the first major economic depression after the onset of industrialism. Banks and businesses by the dozen failed across the country, but Robert's fledgling enterprise held on. In its first year, Robert Garrett and Company recorded \$1,963 in bills receivable and \$652 in bills payable.⁴¹ Robert Garrett was on his way.

All entrepreneurs, from up-and-coming East Coast merchants like Robert Garrett to frontier farmers, had one great interest in common: better transportation and technology to move their goods faster, safer, and more profitably. Western farmers

were producing surplus goods, which filled East Coast merchants' warehouses, destined to be shipped abroad. In turn, settlers in the West wanted manufactured goods from the East and from foreign markets. As the nation pushed its geographical and economic boundaries ever westward, it burst at the seams with optimism and a continent of bountiful resources to exploit. Americans needed better travel routes to replace outmoded dirt toll roads and canals and rivers that could not reach out-of-the-way settlements. George Washington had recognized the need for a national transportation system, calling for a "wide door" to open trade between the East Coast and the Ohio Territories, in order to unify the new nation and encourage economic growth.⁴² Senator John C. Calhoun, imbued with the nationalist spirit of the time, pronounced: "Let us bind the nation together with a perfect system of canals and roads. Let us conquer space."⁴³ The primitive road system of early nineteenth-century America had a long way to go. The slash-in-the-woods roads would not suit a new nation teeming with ambition and fortunes to be made.

The National Road: America's Main Street

In 1806, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark returned from their three-year "Voyage of Discovery" to chart the vast new Louisiana Purchase, which had doubled the size of the United States. In that year, Thomas Jefferson, the great advocate of continental destiny, authorized a bill to construct a thoroughfare to unite the expanding country from east to west. Five years later, the first major public toll road, the National Road, was under construction. It eventually would traverse one-third of the United States, from the mountains of Maryland westward to the Illinois prairie. It soon gained prominence as the nation's first significant hard-surfaced road, the gateway to the West, earning the title of "America's Main Street" or, in a nod to the cobblestone road that united the Roman Empire, the "Appian Way of America."⁴⁴

Baltimore benefited from a head start on the National Road. In 1797, city commissioners had laid out spokes of twenty-foot-wide roads extending to the flourishing hamlets of Frederick and Reisterstown in Maryland and to York, Pennsylvania, with the Frederick Turnpike connecting to other toll roads leading west to Cumberland, in the mountains of Western Maryland, where the National Road began. Baltimore, in essence, became the eastern terminus of the busy thoroughfare and the primary entrepôt for international trade. The roads might have been good for Baltimore commerce, but they were not so enjoyable for jostled journeyers, who consistently ranked them as the worst in the nation.

The National Road expanded westward with the flow of settlers and, within two decades, supported by a web of dozens of secondary roads and rivers, connected the

East Coast to the Mississippi River. By 1818, the road stretched from Cumberland, Maryland, to Wheeling (then in Virginia), on the Ohio River. More than 200,000 people a year traveled west over the road; Ohio and Indiana each took in 90,000 settlers annually for a generation, with 90 percent coming via the National Road.⁴⁵ Endless traffic jams and squabbles over the right-of-way soon clogged the popular new turnpike. Stagecoaches, Conestoga caravans, packhorses, ladies in chaises, riders on horseback, mail carriers, and foot travelers competed with pigs, cattle, geese, and sheep being led to market on the narrow road. Single women could often be seen traveling on their own, a rare sight in Europe.⁴⁶

On any given day, more than a thousand wagons crisscrossed over the Allegheny Mountains. “At times, the racket was deafening,” one journeyer wrote of the cacophony.⁴⁷ Towns, villages, and commercial hubs sprang up along the road. Perhaps the greatest commodities that were carried along the National Road were not travelers or goods, but the diverse cultures and ideas that it helped spread across the country, creating vibrant—if sometimes divisive—communities along the way. As importantly, the National Road symbolized the nation’s dedication to connecting the far reaches of the expanding continent, opening the land for commercial and population growth. With its “stout stone bridges, substantial toll houses, and trim white mileposts, it stood committed to an almost infinite extension of a federal highway system,” the nation’s first major transportation project.⁴⁸

Robert’s business thrived from the National Road. He and Elizabeth settled into their new life in Baltimore, moving to a large brick house on Fayette Street, between Howard and Eutaw Streets, and expanding the family. Over the next eight years, Elizabeth gave birth to four more children: Robert Close in 1819, who died five years later; John Work on July 31, 1820; Elizabeth Barbara on July 25, 1827; and James, whose birth date is unclear and who did not survive infancy. The arrival of their second child to be born in Baltimore, John Work—more than likely named after Robert’s father, John, and his West Middletown friend and business partner, John D. Work—coincided with a yellow fever epidemic that swept up the East Coast, killing one-tenth of the population of the major cities, and two other highly significant national events: the Land Act of 1820, which opened up large tracts of cheap land to western settlement, and the Missouri Compromise of 1820, which Congress passed to hopefully maintain the balance of power in the new territories between pro- and antislavery forces. While the Land Act encouraged a flood of settlers into the Northwest and Missouri Territories, forecasting a bonanza for future Garrett enterprises, the Missouri Compromise only served to widen the political and cultural divisiveness between the free North and the slave-holding South. But, closer to home, trouble was brewing that soon threatened Robert’s—and Baltimore’s—prosperous trade with the interior markets.

The Great Race: By Land or Water?

After Andrew Jackson's victory in the 1815 Battle of New Orleans finally cleared the British out of the country, Americans eagerly weaned themselves of commercial reliance on Europe and shifted full throttle to build their own commerce and transportation systems. The "American system," as it soon became known, promoted internal improvements in agriculture; federal subsidies for transportation, particularly roads and canals; and tariffs to foster American industry and protect it against a flood of imports. Western markets quickly expanded and extended farther west to the Mississippi Valley. But it soon became apparent that wagon transport was too costly and slow to efficiently ship heavy bulk commodities such as wheat, corn, and meat products, which dominated the markets. Commercial expansion of the nation solely by wagon over dirt roads was no longer profitable or expedient.

Although the decade of the 1820s is often referred to as the "Era of Good Feelings" for its respite from partisan political bickering, it engendered anything but high spirits in the transportation race. In 1817, New York took a bold leap, positioning itself for commercial supremacy. The state's legislature passed a bill authorizing \$7 million for the construction of a canal. The National Road was just nearing completion of the first leg, from Cumberland to Wheeling, but already New York's plan spelled doom for a sole reliance on land transport. The new Erie Canal took advantage of the level farmland between Albany (on the Hudson River) and Buffalo (on Lake Erie) and provided a direct water route between New York City and the heartland via the nation's main waterways, the Great Lakes system and the Mississippi River, as well as on to the wider world, through the port of New Orleans. In warmer months, when the canal was ice free, a boat packed with up to twenty tons of goods could float seamlessly from New York City's harbor to the hinterlands in less time and much cheaper than by road. With Robert Fulton's invention of the steamboat in 1807, boats could more easily traverse up—not just down—a waterway. By 1815, steamships, with their great churning paddlewheels, plied the mighty Mississippi River.

New York boldly intruded itself into Baltimore's trade idyll in other menacing ways as well, initiating the Black Ball Line, a fleet of streamlined schooners that whisked prized goods and passengers twice monthly between New York City and England. Most egregious to Baltimore merchants like Robert Garrett, New York began to dominate trade with the hinterlands, edging out its competitors and raking in \$99 million in exports, one-third of the nation's total.⁴⁹ This was especially damaging to Baltimore; while New York had initially built its trade on importing, Baltimore depended on exporting goods to world markets.⁵⁰ To add insult to injury, New York businessmen soon cornered the South's highly lucrative cotton trade,

marketing the crop and shipping it to England's busy textile mills. Other East Coast port cities could only sit and watch in amazement as Manhattan entrepreneurs amassed their millions. New York earned the moniker "emporium of the Western world," a title that galled Baltimore merchants once accustomed to a similar status.

New Yorkers eagerly boasted of their canal conquest. At the Erie Canal's completion in 1825, cannons were placed within earshot of each other along the length of the canal, from Buffalo on Lake Erie to Sandy Hook on the Atlantic Ocean. As New York governor DeWitt Clinton proudly rode the first canal boat, *Seneca*, from Buffalo to Albany, New York, the relay of the "grand salute" boomed from cannon to cannon as he passed by.⁵¹ And, in case anyone doubted New York's transportation triumph, the governor ceremoniously poured a cask of Great Lakes water into New York City's harbor, marking the "wedding of the waters."⁵² The Erie Canal, an instant moneymaker, earned \$1 million in tolls before its full length was even completed, dropping the cost of freight going from Buffalo to Albany from \$100 a ton by road to \$10 by canal.⁵³ Beyond its practical applications, the canal gained fame as the most spectacular engineering feat in the young country, cutting through woods and hills, with an elaborate lock system to level the waterway. But canal passengers hardly traveled in luxury. They squeezed together, "lying packed like sardines in a barrel."⁵⁴ Nonetheless, New York City—soon to reach an astounding population of 200,000—now reigned supreme as "the great commercial maelstrom of the Western world."⁵⁵

The "Big Ditch," as the new Erie Canal soon became known, became a big problem for Baltimore. Could Baltimore hope to replicate New York's good fortune by building a similar canal? By the mid-1820s, the federal government pulled out of major financial backing for a national transportation system, putting the responsibility into the hands of private companies and the states. Reversing his predecessors' support of such a plan, President James Monroe asserted in 1822 that he had "grave doubts as to the Constitutional rights of Congress to impose a highway system, willy-nilly, upon the face of the country."⁵⁶ Baltimore had to find alternatives in both financing and technology. Geography dictated the answer. While upstate New York's level topography easily lent itself to a waterway, the challenging Allegheny Mountains, with ridge after ridge of 3,000-foot peaks and deep river gorges, lay between Baltimore and the western markets. Building a canal through such rugged terrain was out of the question; it would cost a staggering \$22 million—roughly half a billion dollars in today's currency.

By the mid-1820s, the race to find the best mode of transportation was on, and water transport took the lead. The heyday of the National Road, which had made Robert Garrett and other Baltimore merchants wealthy, ended before the road had even been completed. Baltimore had been left behind and needed to keep up. The

city was growing by leaps and bounds; by 1827, its population neared 80,000.⁵⁷ Anxious Baltimore merchants and bankers had to find a much more creative and cost-effective alternative to canals if they hoped to keep their city competitive. For this, they looked to England, with its extraordinary idea of transporting goods and passengers by wagons on tracks, either propelled by some form of steam power or pulled by horses. In the sixteenth century, England had first developed “rail roads” to bring coal to the surface from deep in the earth. Soon England’s twenty-five-mile Stockton and Darlington Railroad—started in 1825 and considered to be the world’s first common carrier—was proving to be efficient. Its modest mileage belied its importance in ushering in a new transportation concept. This exhilarating idea soon crossed the Atlantic. Massachusetts quickly caught on, building a three-mile railroad to haul granite from the quarries near Quincy. Pennsylvania soon followed suit, with its own short-haul railroad at Mauch Chunk; so did Charleston, South Carolina, to link to the Savannah River near Augusta, Georgia. But for longer distances and major transport, the United States remained committed to canals and dirt roads.

After exhaustive investigations, eminent engineers conceded the superiority of railroads. On August 15, 1825, the *Baltimore American* pronounced: “As to the relative advantages of railroads and canals in mountainous or level countries there appears to be but one option. . . . Railroads offer the greater facilities for the conveyance of goods, with more *safety, speed, and economy*.”⁵⁸ Seemingly, the railroad versus canal debate should have been settled. But such assertions only stirred more controversy—and aggressive opposition by canal proponents and investors. On the same day that Charles Carroll of Carrollton launched the B&O Railroad on July 4, 1828, forty miles south of Baltimore in Washington, DC, along the Potomac River, President John Quincy Adams inaugurated another transportation system situated much closer to Baltimore than the Erie Canal: the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which would soon begin making its way toward Cumberland, Maryland. The line in the sand was drawn between canal promoters and railroad advocates. With enormous sums of money—federal, local, and private—already poured into canal construction, the rancor easily escalated into lawsuits and vitriolic salvos fired from both sides.

But canals could not solve the nation’s transportation problem. They could not reach remote towns or stimulate new economic growth in regions far removed from rivers. More challenging, they proved to be expensive and time consuming to construct, and they often froze during the winter, remaining impassable for months. Beyond canals and natural waterways, “the transport of goods was so difficult a thing as seemingly to preclude all hope of development of regions well back from navigable waters.”⁵⁹ The country needed another mode of transportation if inaccessible areas in the interior hoped to prosper. The new idea of a railroad just might be the answer—if it worked out.

Fear and High Ambition

Baltimoreans wasted no time and eagerly conducted their own investigation into England's railroad. William Brown, the oldest son of Baltimore financier Alexander Brown, who founded the nation's first investment bank, had been managing the family's banking house in England for several years. He sent home glowing reports of that country's railroads. Another prominent businessman, Evan Thomas, brother of Baltimore financier Philip Thomas, traveled to England to make his own assessment and supported Brown's evaluation of the railroads' potential. After years of hand wringing and anxiety, a Baltimore founding committee made its move. On February 28, 1827, the committee met at the home of banker George Brown to discuss the new enterprise's challenges and opportunities, later expressed in the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad's *First Annual Report*, of devising "the most efficient means of improving the intercourse between [Baltimore] and the western states."⁶⁰

While the Alleghenies would prove to be a formidable obstacle, the mountains would also provide the railroad with one of its greatest and most lucrative assets. "The inexhaustible profusion of coal," the founders wrote in their *Second Annual Report* in 1828, "is destined to be of the greatest importance to the Rail Road not only as an article of extensive transportation, but also, as particularly, useful to the service of the road itself."⁶¹ The founders could not have anticipated how important coal would be to the nation, particularly in fueling the post-Civil War economic boom. The first board of directors—representing the old moneyed families of Baltimore: Patterson, Ellicott, and Brown, among others—elected Philip E. Thomas, president of Merchants Bank, as the company's president.

The founders dreamed no small dreams. The name of the new company said it all. The railroad would stretch an unimaginable distance, over three hundred miles from Baltimore to the Ohio River. It would follow the same route as the C&O Canal, but would continue westward over the Alleghenies. The fledgling railroad promised to be the most massive construction project in the nation, if not the world, at the time.⁶² The founders did not intend to build a short-haul railroad, such as the one in Massachusetts, nor would the B&O have the advantage of traversing relatively level ground, as did New York's Erie Canal. Rather, the new railroad that might possibly save Baltimore would have to conquer mountains and gorges—and northern rivals—that stood in the way of Baltimore and its future prosperity. As a commentator wryly noted of the company's founding, "The Baltimore & Ohio was born as much out of fear as out of high ambition."⁶³ It would not—could not—replicate other forms of transportation. Instead, it would create its own, adapting to the unique, unforgiving terrain of the mideastern United States and the challenge of creating an entirely new

kind of corporate enterprise. In the process, unwittingly, the B&O would invent American railroading.⁶⁴

From the start, the B&O required unique capital investment. No other project of this magnitude had ever been attempted during the country's first seventy-five years. The anticipated \$30 million in costs to eventually link Baltimore to the Ohio River dwarfed the \$7 million to construct the Erie Canal.⁶⁵ Because of the enormity of the capital investment, which precluded strictly private financing, the Baltimore committee petitioned the state of Maryland for funding, applying for a bill to incorporate a joint stock company. By March 1827, the General Assembly signed the bill. The B&O became the first public/private corporation in the country. Although the unique financing arrangement was successful in launching the B&O, the public/private co-ownership of the company in the years ahead would prove to be problematic for company presidents—including John W. Garrett.

After newspapers around the country announced the sale of 15,000 shares of B&O stock, a buying frenzy took off. In a rush to be a part of the newest technology—our current twenty-first-century fervor pales by comparison—eager investors lined the streets to purchase stock. Enthusiasm “almost beggars description. . . . Excitement had gone far beyond fever heat and reached the boiling point. Everyone wanted stock.” John H. B. Latrobe, son of famed US Capitol architect Benjamin H. Latrobe, later recalled that all but 1,000 shares of stock were sold within four hours, noting: “Parents subscribed in the names of their children. . . . The possession of stock was regarded as a provision for old age.”⁶⁶

Robert Garrett cautiously joined in, buying eleven shares. The stock sale quickly raised over \$2 million, three-fourths by private investors and the balance by Baltimore City; within days, those numbers doubled. By the final day of the sale, 23,000 buyers had purchased 42,000 shares, raising more than \$4 million for the new company.⁶⁷ Some enthusiasts could afford to buy only a fraction of a share. The nation's first publicly chartered common carrier had been financed at lightning speed—in just two months. It was risky. Investors had no idea if the railroad gamble would pay off.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, as the *Baltimore American* boasted, “the railroad is bringing an empire to our doors.” The enthusiasm was infectious: “The excitement in Baltimore roused public attention elsewhere and a railroad mania began to pervade the land.”⁶⁹

Little did those eager investors suspect that the B&O almost failed to materialize before the enterprise even got off the ground. The company faced a problem in securing enough iron for the tracks. The United States did not have enough foundries at the time to produce the necessary 15,000 tons of rails.⁷⁰ Domestic foundries primarily produced nails, hoops, wire bars, and farm implements, but not pig iron—so named for the shape of the oblong ingots that resembled sleeping piglets in a sty—needed for sturdy iron railroad tracks.⁷¹ Under the terms of its 1827 charter, the

B&O had ten years to reach Cumberland, nestled among the Maryland mountains, and by the company's inauguration, the clock was already ticking. The B&O needed British iron, but early in 1828, Congress had raised tariffs on imports, hoping to protect home industry, primarily in the Northern states. For Southern states, the bill became known as the Tariff of Abominations, because of the higher tariffs the region had to pay on goods it could not produce and thus had to import. The bill also had much wider and more serious repercussions: it raised tariffs on the South's primary export—cotton—making it difficult for Britain to afford the South's economic mainstay. Within four years, the tariff bill was deemed unconstitutional, but the damage was done, leading to the one of the first sectional fractures of the nation, the Nullification Crisis of 1832.

The B&O could not wait years for the domestic iron industry to develop. Local iron manufacturers sent bids to the B&O that were too expensive or were inadequate to supply the needed materials. B&O board member William Patterson led the campaign to lobby protectionist Congress to drop or lessen the tariffs on imports, a move Congress was reluctant to make at a time when developing home industry in the United States was crucial to national economic development. Patterson wrote to B&O president Thomas, wondering how the B&O could convince Congress "to relinquish the duties on iron [that] is so important to the use on our railroad," adding that the B&O board must take "every opportunity of knowing Congress' sentiments and [I] will take every occasion I can of speaking to them on the subject."⁷² With the B&O representing a promising venture that would broaden internal improvements, the battle was on between lessening the tariffs on imported iron and thereby allowing the B&O to proceed at top speed, or waiting until domestic iron production increased.

Within a week of receiving Patterson's letter, Thomas contacted Robert Garrett, who, as an early advocate of the project, first became involved with the B&O at this critical moment. Thomas asked Robert to help in the effort to mitigate the high tariffs. "We are at a loss to know [in] what form to have the Bill prepared," Thomas wrote, prevailing upon Robert "to advise me of the opinion both as regards the expediency of our preparing a Bill and respects to its form."⁷³ With his years of dealing with tariffs and imports, Robert immediately responded with the requisite information. Now armed with convincing facts about the railroads' advantages and bolstered by aggressive lobbying and newspaper campaigns—and, not least, aligned with strong advocates in the House and the Senate—Thomas made the case to Congress.

As expected, railroad opponents and canal developers, all with much at stake, lobbied aggressively against the project. But by May, Congress acknowledged the B&O's potential for aiding national economic development and voted to allow the project to

progress with British iron. Imported rail iron would be exempted from duty, although a 25 percent ad valorem charge would be levied, based on the value of the iron, not on the quantity or weight. The B&O received its first shipment of British iron in June 1829 and, within a year, imported 500 tons of rails at \$58 per ton; Alex. Brown and Sons financed the first shipments.⁷⁴ Finally, after months of Congressional deliberation and cajolery aimed at the right politicians, the nation's first common carrier, established to offer scheduled freight and passenger service to the public, became a reality.

Baltimore's new transportation scheme, however unusual and unpredictable, arrived not a minute too soon. The cheering crowd that gathered at Mount Clare on Independence Day in 1828 welcomed any bold idea that would keep their city competitive and prosperous. The same seed of ambition that had been firmly planted in Robert Garrett years earlier similarly was established in Baltimore's audacious experiment to beat the competition with a "rail road." Such ambition would save Baltimore and generate a transportation and commercial revolution in the United States. At the time of the B&O's modest beginnings, no one could have imagined that the railroads of the future, with their powerful new technology, would soon replace what Senator John C. Calhoun had once called "the perfect system of canals and roads" that connected the nation from coast to coast.⁷⁵ In the first volume of the *American Railroad Journal and Mechanics' Magazine* in 1838, the Reverend Dr. Flint, a Massachusetts clergyman, predicted the railroads would be "strong clamps that were destined to bind together with ribs of steel the whole of this great country" and expressed hope that they "might be multiplied and extended till they shall have cemented this Union beyond the possibility of severance."⁷⁶

In the critical years ahead, the Garretts would become primary financial backers of the B&O, as well as integral to its success in conquering the Allegheny Mountains and reaching the lucrative markets of the Ohio Valley. For Robert's 8-year-old son John—unknowing at the time—July 4, 1828, would forever change his future, as well.

A Flourishing Condition

1828–1840

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JOHN GARRETT did not particularly like whiling away his time in the classroom, despite his father's insistence that he and 14-year-old Henry attend the elite Boisseau Academy, Baltimore's "premier school for boys."¹ He was not a bad student, but he found the classroom boring. Studying the classics and mathematics and perfecting his penmanship paled in comparison with the excitement of the busy city beyond the walls of the school. He instead liked to roam around noisy and boisterous Baltimore with Henry. But their father, who had had little if any formal education in his own boyhood, insisted on nothing but the best for his sons. John Garrett made short work of the requisite essay-writing exercises whenever possible. Embellishment and elaboration were not his strong suits. He preferred to get to the point, a skill that would serve him well in the future. "As you requested me to give you some general information concerning the city," he hurriedly dashed off in 1832 in response to a question about Baltimore, "I am happy to state that it was never in a more flourishing condition."²

No wonder the Garrett boys found exploring the port city to be far more fun than school. The same energetic town that thirty years earlier had dazzled Robert Garrett, fresh from the frontier, equally seduced his sons. Over the three decades since their father had taken Captain Sharp's advice and headed to Baltimore in 1801, the city had thrived and was, as the adolescent essayist had reported, in a "flourishing condition." This fascinating, chaotic city provided an endless wonderland for the inquisitive and adventurous Garrett brothers. They would have watched shipwrights and sailmakers execute their intricate crafts and, at their father's company, would have helped workers hitch the horses and pack up the Conestoga wagons heading out to the Allegheny Mountains and intriguingly distant places beyond. More than likely they took a ride on the new omnibus as it made its way through crowded streets; visited Rembrandt Peale's Baltimore Museum, with its exotic skeletal mastodon; wandered up and down fashionable Baltimore Street to peer into

shop windows filled with exotic goods; or walked a few blocks north to Mount Vernon Place to look at the spectacular Washington Monument, a towering 178-foot Doric column honoring the nation's first president.

The boys might have passed by the White Swan, the Golden Lamb, and the Black Horse taverns on Franklin Street, all selling whiskey at three cents a glass. They would have seen the city's pride and joy, the country's first Roman Catholic cathedral, designed by Benjamin Henry Latrobe, architect of the US Capitol. This magnificent church, honoring Maryland's founding principle of religious freedom, gave the city an undeniable air of European aristocracy and importance. After visiting the city in 1827, President John Quincy Adams rechristened Baltimore the "Monumental City" for the beautiful ornamental structures that dotted the landscape. Frances Trollope described Baltimore in 1830 as "one of the smartest cities to approach in the Union."³ Others agreed. French aristocrat and Romanticist François-René de Chateaubriand found that approaching the city by water "was like sailing into a park"—although, as others more realistically noted, that "park" often included sickly air, foul vapors, and slimy waters, similar to most industrial ports of the day.⁴ "Genteel civility" co-mingled with "boisterous activity," Chateaubriand concluded.⁵

With "genteel civility" came civic responsibility, a philosophy of noblesse oblige inherited from Europe that soon would characterize American philanthropy. In the 1830s, the country experienced the throes of religious fervor known as the Second Great Awakening—the first having occurred well before the Revolution—in which American reformers worked desperately to perfect what they felt was an imperfect society, falling well short of the ideals expressed in the Declaration of Independence. The antebellum evangelical surge led to the country's first great reform effort of the Industrial Age. Americans established orphanages, poor houses, and charities of every variety at an unprecedented pace.

As the Garretts ascended the social ladder, they contributed to Baltimore's reputation as the most generous philanthropic American city in the nineteenth century.⁶ In 1824, Elizabeth Garrett co-founded the Baltimore Female Society for the Relief of the Indigent Sick. Like many middle-class women's charities at the time, the organization, according to its *Annual Report*, started from an acute need "to consider the wants and suffering of the sick poor in our city," who often were victims of the nation's nascent and erratic industrialization.⁷ In the fall of 1823, two women distributing bibles in Baltimore's south side "near the brickyards" were mortified to find "few who could read but many who were sick and suffering for the most abject want, living in old stables, damp cellars, and on loose straw on the ground—wholly destitute of comforts needed for the sick."⁸ Elizabeth and other brigades of benevolent, bonneted women rolled up their sleeves, formed their religiously affiliated charity, and did what they could to ameliorate the suffering of Baltimore's poor. Elizabeth

remained active in it for fifty-three years, until her death in 1877. Over the next decades, the Garretts supported a range of charitable organizations with annual contributions—the Union Protestant Infirmary (\$5), the Seamen’s Bethel (\$1), the Aged Men’s Home (\$10)—and purchased a life membership in the Maryland State Bible Society (\$50).⁹ Robert and Elizabeth Garrett set the tone for philanthropic giving that would define future Garrett generations.

Never forgetting his Presbyterian passions from his boyhood in West Middletown, Robert Garrett presided over the board of Baltimore’s Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church on Tammany Street. When he first arrived in Baltimore, Robert found Baltimore Presbyterians far different from those who had surrounded him in West Middletown. By that time, many Scots Irish Presbyterians who had come to Baltimore in the mid-eighteenth century had become wealthy merchants and bankers. Rising above their modest beginnings, they demanded to be “treated according to custom with dainties and luxuries, leaving the loaves and fishes, the sackcloth and ashes to the more humble minority.”¹⁰

Robert—who, as an up-and-coming merchant, had ranked among this “humble minority”—must have felt that, as a newcomer to Baltimore, he had encountered a far different sect than the unpretentious, fiery frontier Calvinists of West Middletown. Nonetheless, he continued his earlier “peculiarities of Presbyterianism” and eagerly joined Baltimore’s lively and diverse religious community. He pored over issues of the new Boston-based publication, *Christian World*.¹¹ By 1825, he could afford the exorbitant price of \$75, about one-third the annual wages of a male factory worker, to purchase a pew in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, and later, as his fortunes mounted, he financed the church’s new edifice.¹²

Robert also sharpened his political views. He became a fervent Southern Democrat, an ethos that carried forward to his sons. Andrew Jackson, the 1830s symbol of democratic egalitarianism, ambition, and industriousness, represented all that Robert had hoped for in his adopted country. The politics and self-determination of the era shaped Robert’s formative business years, as did living in the Southern state of Maryland. He became, as a business correspondent described, “a good Jacksonite.”¹³

Steeped in the religious and reform fervor of the antebellum era, Elizabeth Garrett ran her home accordingly. As a daughter and then a wife and mother of the upper class, she would have been raised with the prevalent ideals of republican motherhood in her own childhood and later would have instilled in her children the same virtues of civic responsibility, patriotism, strength of character, hard work, and moral grounding. Robert and Elizabeth exemplified all such traits. The family did not own slaves but employed two free black servants: Rachel and her son, who stayed with the family for many years.¹⁴

With John and Henry carefully crossing t's and dotting i's under the watchful eyes of the Boisseau Academy's five instructors, at home their mother similarly prepared them for a future befitting the family's rising stature. The boys' school composition books reveal that they heeded their mother's stern guidance. Much like elite young girls of the time, who were required to compose essays such as "The Advantage of Resisting Temptation" and "The Power of Beauty" to instill moral discipline and the expectations for females, so did John and Henry face daily drills to learn the boundaries of appropriate male behavior. They practiced writing letters to family and acquaintances—real and invented. In an essay entitled "Amusements," 13-year-old John demonstrated that he knew where to draw the line between right and wrong. "Amusements are proper," he wrote in carefully embellished script, "when there is nothing of importance to engage our attention, when they are consistent with decency and propriety, and also when our character and our reputation is not tarnished." He added that, after engaging in too many improper amusements, "we are totally ruined."¹⁵ In one composition, he gleefully wrote of an imaginary hunting trip, describing the death of a relative. "Excuse me for anything farther at present," he abruptly ended his colorful essay, "I being about to attend a funeral."¹⁶ He exhibited precise penmanship and confidently signed all of his letters and essays either with a popular abbreviation at the time, "Jno. W. Garrett," or "John W. Garrett," as he would prefer to do in adulthood. Henry faced the same daily regimen, learning the ethos of ambition and industriousness expected of the rising mercantile class and the consequences of laziness. Examining the dangers of indolence in an essay with that title, Henry wrote that "self complacency" was a "condition and habit of mankind in the present and past ages" that inevitably led to "the depths of misery."¹⁷

Robert and Elizabeth made sure that their children only engaged in proper amusements and avoided indolence at all costs. The family dutifully attended the Associate Reformed Church; socialized at parties and picnics with the extended and unusually boisterous Garrett-Stouffer clan of cousins, aunts, and uncles; enjoyed boat rides on the Chesapeake Bay; and, early on, learned to ride horseback. Henry was deemed the more outgoing son, always ready for fun and known for his "playful words." He, along with his brother, eagerly attended dances, weddings, and other festivities enjoyed by Baltimore's close-knit and comfortable mercantile class.¹⁸

The family's letters reveal that Elizabeth and Robert nurtured a companionable, fun-loving home, albeit a God-fearing one, with good-hearted ribbing countered with temperate discipline by their gentle but strict father. When his parents were away, John looked forward to what he called "epistles from Elizabeth."¹⁹ Their mother seldom sat still and constantly fussed over her brood. "Mother unusually well," Henry Garrett wrote to John while on a trip to Pittsburgh with his parents, "and *pesky*—that's nat'ral all right. The only trouble [is] she is now fidgeting for something

to fidget about.”²⁰ Henry warmly referred to Elizabeth as “the pious Maternal”; John called her “revered Mama.”²¹ Robert occasionally let his wry humor slip out, joking in his Irish lilt that he hoped the family’s longtime and beloved housekeeper, Rachel, in her “youthful giddiness” would elope while the family was away.²²

Lizzie—or Lissie, as her brothers spelled her name—nine years younger than Henry and seven years younger than John, was a natural and frequent target of her big brothers’ good-hearted pranks and teasing. They joked about her posture, her looks, and her penmanship, although John had little room for criticizing the latter; once he left the watchful eye of his teachers, his once-precise penmanship deteriorated considerably. Lizzie eventually escaped to boarding school in Greenfield, Massachusetts, but volleyed long distance at her brothers’ good-humored jibes. “What do you do now?” she wrote whimsically to Henry. “Have you anyone to scold?”²³ Robert, noticing Henry’s sudden eagerness to make the 360-mile trip to visit his sister—and possibly her friends—at school, wrote to John: “I do not know why, unless it should be on account of that black-eyed girl that is there. . . . There is some Yankey influence.”²⁴

As Lizzie prepared to return to Baltimore after two years of schooling, her brothers, obviously eager for her return, didn’t miss one more opportunity to tease their little sister long distance. Henry gushed, “What a brilliant era that will be for the Monumental City, already famed over the wide universe for the many fascinations of her beautiful daughters when this paragon shall step upon the stage, the native[s] will doubtless stare and blush for their own imperfections.” John added a more serious congratulatory note, revealing pride in his sister’s educational achievements: “Oh! Lissie Garrett, that much is expected; that you are to return, accomplished, elegant, perfectly amiable & withal wondrously useful.”²⁵

By early adolescence, John had picked up on the family’s responsibility to endorse charitable causes, not least the organizations nearest and dearest to his mother. “Dear Friend,” he wrote in one of his school composition books, describing the poor of Baltimore, “[they] are duly attended to by numerous societies now in operation *viz* the Orphans Asylum, the Society for the Relief of the Indigent Sick and the Humane Impartial Society.”²⁶ Her son’s endorsement of her favorite charity must have warmed Elizabeth’s heart.

Learning from the Master

Life was not all family picnics and sailing on the Chesapeake Bay, certainly not for ambitious Robert Garrett and his sons, who were expected to one day take their places in the family firm. By the 1830s, Robert Garrett and Company, as a result of Robert’s thirty years of hard work, enjoyed the same “flourishing” future John had

described of Baltimore in his composition books. While Elizabeth taught her children the finer nuances of socializing and, as young Henry had written, avoiding “the depths of misery,” their father, too, had his share of parental instruction. As the boys reached adolescence and were still attending school in Baltimore, he began introducing them to the inner workings of the company. There was no better teacher to instill the intricacies of trade and transportation—and besting the competition—than Robert Garrett. The *New York Times* noted that he “transacted business in the strictest manner. He had the shrewdness and sagacity of his Scotch Irish blood and the qualities were transmitted to the [sons].”²⁷ As his first employer, Captain Sharp, had noted years earlier, Robert displayed “an extraordinary capacity for business.” He also had a keen sense for spotting future commercial trends. He needed both qualities to stay afloat in the sink-or-swim fledgling economy of the early nineteenth century.

Robert made sure his sons received no special treatment. As their father had done decades earlier, they learned the business of commerce and transportation from the ground up, working in the small counting room of the Garrett warehouse and helping their father and his clerks respond to dozens of business letters a month from customers. Much of the correspondence dealt with fluctuating economic markets, problems in transportation, and the production of goods. Robert had to be familiar with the manufacturing processes of the goods he shipped, primarily milling, slaughtering, and tanning. And he made sure his sons learned, as well. They labored side by side with the warehouse workers, doing the same grueling manual jobs: “packing madder and ramming Spanish whiting and so forth and so on Bah!” 16-year-old Henry wrote disgustedly of his assigned tasks in 1834.²⁸

In the 1830s, Robert traded primarily over the National Road, as he had for three decades. He first used teams of packhorses; then, as the firm grew, he made a sizable investment, buying several Conestoga wagons. The massive, blue, twenty-six-foot long, boat-shaped contraptions, topped with white canvas bonnets and made watertight to ford rivers, held up to eight tons of goods. Each wagon cost \$250 and required powerful “Conestoga” horses, selling for \$170 to \$200 apiece.²⁹ The wagons were an awkward source of transport, “curious affairs,” one observer wrote, “which were set in ponderous wheels, with tires from four to six inches in width and hauled by six powerful horses adorned with jingle bells.”³⁰ The Conestoga wagon, while the most modern land conveyance at the time, had not improved much in speed or efficiency since caravans of camels plodded over the ancient Silk Road two millennia earlier. For Robert, as for other merchants, each wagon packed with precious goods meant a make-or-break gamble; one slip off a rocky cliff and all would be lost if it was not insured. Robert had an advantage, however. His years of working on the

turnpike as a boy had taught him about safety and how best to maneuver the big wagons.

A typical Garrett consignment sent to busy frontier stores might include tin pans and cups, spices brought to Baltimore from the Far East, crackers, rice, tobacco, kegs of powder, medicine, shovels, cowbells, and “segars,” as well as the newest fabrics and fashions from Europe.³¹ On the return trip to Baltimore from the West, frontier merchants packed Garrett wagons with clover, timothy, feathers, orchard grass, seeds, beeswax, seneca, wool, valuable animal pelts, and “barrels of strong whiskey.”³² Robert charged 1½ to 2½ cents per pound to transport merchandise west to Pittsburgh, and double that amount to the Ohio River.³³ When all was ready, the Conestoga caravan lumbered single file from the Garrett warehouse in downtown Baltimore and headed west to the Alleghenies. On a good day, the wagons might journey twenty miles, passing just a few miles south of the Garrett farm in West Middletown. The 275-mile trip to Wheeling (then in Virginia) took three weeks. The wagoners who held the six-in-hand reins of the massive horses were a robust and rowdy bunch, hardy enough to control the big wagons and mighty beasts on perilous descents down the mountains.

Robert counted on ready-made customers in western Pennsylvania and Ohio to buy his consignments, mostly storeowners eager to stock their shelves. By 1833, the National Road extended to Columbus, Ohio. Drawing on his knowledge of the Ohio Territory and the contacts he made as a West Middletown merchant, Robert easily expanded his business as far west as Terre Haute, Indiana. These contacts dotted the National Road; more settlers spilling into the Northwest and Missouri Territories meant more business for Robert Garrett and Company in Baltimore.

Robert proved to be the consummate businessman, not only in turning a profit, but also in maintaining long-term relationships. His dealings with customers exemplified the typical early nineteenth-century reliance on maintaining personal, although often long-distance, commercial associations.³⁴ The records of the company show the constancy of such business relationships over decades, which benefited not only the customers, but also Robert. The reliability of his company quickly spread by word of mouth along the National Road, the usual advertising model of the day. He often used friends, relatives, or business associates as couriers to carry cash for goods received or ordered, entrusting them with significant amounts of money, as did his customers. “Enclosed you will find Three Hundred and fifty dollars, which I send by my friend, Mr. Miller,” a customer wrote in 1836.³⁵ Another wrote that he “had remitted six hundred dollars to you for Mr. Rule and an order for goods.”³⁶ Robert established an enviable network of local store owners and distributors in the West, who received and sold merchandise shipped from Baltimore and, in turn, rounded

up farm and frontier consignments to be sent back East on the Garrett wagons. Loyal agents could make or break a business. Robert's former employer, Captain Sharp, made good on his promise to send Garrett "all the patronage to be had."³⁷

It also helped to have a large family in the retail business, and Robert's in-laws, the Close and Stouffer relatives, counted among the most reliable of his associates. One relative moved from West Middletown and opened a store in Vermilion, Ohio, on Lake Erie, and stocked his store with goods from Robert's company.³⁸ Another dependable agent was John D. Work, Robert's former business partner in West Middletown. By the 1830s, Work had become a member of the Pennsylvania legislature. The two men maintained an amicable, long-distance business partnership for nearly a half century.³⁹ Work often wrote to Robert on pink paper, carefully listing the goods received and sold. His choice of an optimistic color belied occasional economic slumps on his end of the business transactions.

Robert worked hard to squeeze out whatever profits he could when bad news from the western markets crossed his desk. Running a trans-Appalachian business could be tricky—and not for the faint of heart. As long-distance trade developed, more-sophisticated methods of money exchange were required, and credit became the core of the emerging market economy in the early nineteenth century. Robert had to be judicious about extending credit to new clients, and he walked a fine line between expanding his business and overextending to customers who might default on a payment. Collecting monies due from an always-shifting population hundreds of miles away was a constant problem. Robert Garrett often dispatched a junior partner to track down creditors or, when that failed, hired local attorneys to settle debts, a procedure that could drag on for years without the promise of a settlement.⁴⁰

Adding to the problem, the nation's monetary system remained unsettled. Although the first US money was minted in 1793, many currencies were still in use decades later; in the South, every state had its own currency. A bank in Indiana, for example, could issue a note inconsistent with its monetary value in Baltimore. Like all successful merchants at the time, Robert would have been familiar with a range of methods of payment, both domestic and international, and his sons, working at his side, also had to learn the complexities of finance. Robert kept careful track of foreign political affairs, fluctuating international markets, and the comings and goings of ships up and down the Eastern Seaboard. He voraciously read newspapers and shipping manifests, jotting down notes in the margins.⁴¹ He had to stay alert to get the best prices on incoming goods. He also carefully watched transportation rates and changing consumer needs. By the late 1830s, as the nation expanded geographically and economically, American enterprise became more sophisticated and specialized.⁴² Wholesalers began to corner the market on particular goods, such as

sugar and coffee. Robert no longer had to trade directly with sellers in the West Indies; he could buy such goods cheaper in Baltimore and ship them to the West.

Not all of Robert's customers agreed with his business decisions. One, N. Goff in the West, fired off a missive accusing Robert of underselling his product prematurely, at too low a price, once it reached Baltimore: "I *ask you* if it was a business like transaction to sell oil for \$1 when you knew it would fetch \$1.25 in a few weeks after the sale—such a sale by *any other* house would cause me to leave immediately."⁴³ Another complained that he had "received 18 hams, one of which is *entirely rotten*, so much so I could not even give it away."⁴⁴ Despite such displeasure, both remained Robert's customers.

Robert constantly thought of ways to expand beyond his western trade. By 1830, he had increased business up and down the Eastern Seaboard and ventured into international trade with the Caribbean, as his father-in-law had. Many of the sleek ships that sailed from Baltimore's harbor were packed with goods from Robert's company. He sold flour in Boston, got mackerel from New England and butter from the West Indies, and did a brisk business with the federal government, securing a contract to ship middlings (salt pork) to the US Army in Florida.⁴⁵ His scope of business expertise extended from domestic to international markets; accordingly, he had to be aware of always-shifting international alliances, wars, and fluctuating markets abroad as well as closer to home.

With his first warehouse in Baltimore bursting at the seams, Robert established a network of warehouses in Annapolis, Maryland, and in Virginia in Richmond, Petersburg, Alexandria, and Norfolk, to store surplus goods until a profitable time to sell them arrived. He invested in real estate and ground rents—rental for land on which others constructed buildings. "Upon the latter his authority was acknowledged in the business and none knew better than he," an observer noted.⁴⁶ Robert prospered enough to back the York and Gettysburg Turnpike and to buy stock in a company to raise the Royal Navy's *HMS Hussar*, which went down in New York's East River in 1780, purportedly carrying \$5 million in gold. His treasure-hunting gamble did not pay off, and the riches still remain unrecovered.⁴⁷ He served on the boards of the Baltimore Water Company and the Baltimore Gas Company and, in 1847, started the Eutaw Savings Bank.

As he primed his sons to take their places in the family business, Robert, the maturing elder statesman, struck a dashing figure, a "tall gentleman, erect, largely framed, not corpulent, with white hair, a kindly eye, a firm, yet sweet mouth, and his smooth-shaven skin hale with the uniform roseate tint of healthy old age." No longer resembling the rough-and-tumble boy from the frontier, Robert "had the appearance of the gentleman *debonair*." He hospitably greeted customers at the door of his warehouse "holding his spectacles in one hand the newspaper in the other."⁴⁸

Tall, with “white hair, a kindly eye, a firm yet a sweet mouth and smooth shaven skin,” Robert wore only black clothes, occasionally brightened by a white necktie. “His low quartered, well-black shoes in which he dressed his shapely feet suggested he had given up pumps and silk stockings with reluctance.”⁴⁹ In 1833, with a growing family, a prosperous business to his name, and a respected position in his community, the 50-year-old Irish immigrant became a citizen of the country whose commercial and transportation future he was helping to shape.

A Gentleman and a Scholar

By 1834, Henry and John diverged in their education, leaving Baltimore’s Boisseau Academy and moving on to private boarding schools. Henry enrolled at the Bel Air Academy in Harford County, thirty miles north of Baltimore near the Pennsylvania border, where he studied the classics. John took a different route. The principal and four teachers of Boisseau Academy wrote a glowing letter to Robert recommending that 14-year-old John matriculate to Presbyterian-affiliated Lafayette Preparatory School in Easton, Pennsylvania. No longer the distracted young schoolboy forced to articulate the rights and wrongs of amusements, John had matured and settled into serious academic study. The headmaster described him as “a gentleman and a scholar [who] has been perfectly accordant with all the principles of gentility and decorum.”⁵⁰ Besides wanting John to continue his education at a Presbyterian school, Robert might have wished to acquaint his son with the busy industrial and transportation region fifty miles north of Philadelphia and seventy miles west of New York City. Henry teased his brother about the adventures that awaited him at Lafayette: “Now I suppose we may look for scenes in Philadelphia by a youth of Baltimore.”⁵¹

For the first time, John was away from the immediate sphere and influence of his close-knit family and thrust on his own into a larger world. He got off to a rocky start. Bad health plagued him. In letters home, he expressed his homesickness. He wrote to his father of being “very unwell,” but was determined to carry on with his studies “as long as my limbs would bear me.”⁵² He was painfully shy, almost to the point of debilitation, and might have suffered from depression. Over time, his symptoms subsided and he began to socialize more easily. By January, he was improving and wrote, “I am not now as formerly depressed as life forsakes me when a stranger speaks.”⁵³ Busyness kept his mind off his health problems. He whimsically informed his father that he had “earned himself immortal fame as an architect” after he “planned, designed, and wholly executed from foundation to pinnacle a Coal House” for the school. It appears that the budding architect did not build the structure himself, however, but rather rendered the plans, and “a petition is now before the Pennsylvania Legislature to grant the requisite funds” to complete it.⁵⁴

He slowly emerged from his shyness and health problems and excelled enough in his studies that within two years, the school's headmaster recommended that he transfer to Lafayette College. The nearby institution, organized in 1824, began offering classes in 1832 and advertised itself as "a Christian college under the care of the Presbyterian Synod of Pennsylvania." It offered "Classical, Latin, and General Scientific, Civil, Electrical, and Mining Engineering and Chemical courses."⁵⁵ Before interest in higher education accelerated in the late nineteenth century, Lafayette, like most fledgling colleges of the day, barely survived on a modest budget and an even leaner income. Students from the college and the preparatory school took on a range of uncompensated tasks—tending the grounds and attempting odds and ends of repair jobs—to keep the college afloat. When not doing his share of such tasks, John studied French, Latin, surveying, history, and rhetoric. His favorite subjects included literature and classical art. He joined a literary society, where he debated the finer points of Euclid and Homer. The club helped him overcome the initial shyness that had plagued him when first entering the school.⁵⁶ At Lafayette, John met William Findley Burns, a fellow Baltimorean of the same age. They forged what would become a lifelong friendship, as Burns, too, came from a successful merchant family and eventually returned to Baltimore to take over his family's business, the Burns and Russell Company.⁵⁷ John's years away from home eventually nurtured self-confidence and independence and brought him out of his adolescent awkwardness and depression. His academic studies honed his speaking and writing skills, while the literary club developed his debating expertise, allowing him to defend his viewpoints and mix more easily with others. By the age of 16, he could readily hold his own in arguing a point.

Although separated for their advanced schooling, John and Henry carried on their good-natured relationship. John often practiced his French—and future courtship strategies—by translating, not always successfully, romantic poems in his letters to Henry. Looking up to his older and, presumably, wiser and more worldly brother for advice on the opposite sex, John joked, "My beloved"—as he often called his brother—"do you intend on getting a female this spring?"⁵⁸ Henry might not have had time for such indulgences. He attended school closer to Baltimore and often spent his weekends working in the counting room of the family firm with his father. When cholera swept through Baltimore, he wrote to John that several Garrett warehouse workers had been stricken with the disease. John responded with distress, wanting to be kept apprised of the situation.

Robert's vision to channel the goods of western farmers through the port of Baltimore and out to the wider world and, conversely, to bring global goods through Baltimore and out to the west proved to be crucial to the city's commercial ascendancy. "Mr. Garrett was among the foremost in insisting upon Baltimore's looking

for the future mainly to the West, and taking her position in the vanguard of the Western march of American enterprise,” an observer wrote. He “demonstrated that the first duty of Baltimore during that transition point in our history was to obtain possession of the internal business of the country by being the soonest to reach the vast Western trade which was developing beyond the mountains.”⁵⁹

Robert Garrett could use all the business savvy he could get to stay on his confident trajectory. In 1836, the country began spiraling into what would become a devastating economic depression, the Panic of 1837. By the last year of the Jackson administration, credit tightened and cash became scarce, since President Andrew Jackson did not renew the charter for the Second Bank of America. Factories and mills, stores, and transportation companies closed by the score. The 1835 Baltimore Bank Riot, in which 3,000 angry Baltimoreans tore through the streets to protest the banks’ perceived corporate chicanery, had foretold a grim financial future as banks by the dozens nationwide shuttered their doors. Those that stayed afloat watched every penny. “The banks will not discount one dollar,” Robert complained.⁶⁰ When cash was unavailable, the account ledgers at Robert Garrett and Company showed an assortment of payments, from Tidewater notes to Chesapeake & Ohio Canal scrip, as customers paid however they could. The economic depression would last for six years, well into 1843. Robert cut short his sons’ educations and brought them back to Baltimore to help the family business ride out the bleak economic downturn. He already had weathered one major economic storm, the Panic of 1819, and several recessions in between, and he hoped to do the same again.

No longer carefree students, John and Henry, at ages 17 and 19, settled into their assigned duties at Robert Garrett and Company and got to work immediately to deal with the financial crisis. John, now emboldened and confident from his education and showing an independent streak, proved to be the more adventurous of the brothers, preferring to get out of the counting room and travel on his own over the mountains to keep up and expand the company’s business. Henry, a budding Baltimore bon vivant, chose to stay close to home to work with his father, although he was well acquainted with the firm’s western customers. While John studied at Lafayette, Henry had traveled with his parents to western Pennsylvania and Virginia during the summer of 1835, meeting the extended Garrett family and cultivating business contacts. “Henry is very highly esteemed in this region by all your family and friends who had the pleasure of seeing him,” a friend of Robert’s wrote after meeting Henry.⁶¹

John caught on fast. Like his father at the same age, who already was established in commerce, John displayed “an extraordinary capacity for business.” By 1837, John began receiving business correspondence in his own name and handling specific accounts. On his travels, he brokered deals in flour and followed pending orders in

butter and pork. As importantly, John learned the value of expanding and maintaining business through personal contact and relationships. He cultivated his diplomatic skills in handling the firm's accounts and called on his college-years debate team talents to track down and come to terms with customers in financial arrears during the economic reversal. Recognizing his customers' monetary straits during the depression, he never dismissed the future value of a potential customer once the economy rebounded. One customer's misfortunes, John noted, "were considerable," but he had "acquaintance with the Western merchants" and "I would be far from unwilling to have his Eastern business."⁶²

As the financial depression deepened, John wrote home: "I much regret to learn of the bad state of affairs in Baltimore. At the same time, was much gratified to learn of the state of *comfortability* of Messrs. R. G. & Co."⁶³ Not everyone fared so well, and John had to be judicious about customers' financial reverses. Many customers in the West lost everything. One wrote: "My farm near Salem is to be sold on the 11th of next month for the payment of a debt owed to you. . . . It will be sold for ready money. . . . My object in troubling you now is to ascertain the possibility of obtaining a little time for payment of the money, if necessary, out of concern for my wife and children."⁶⁴

On his travels to the West, John depended on Henry to keep him informed of business back home, an arrangement that John often found unsatisfactory. Writing to "My Dear Brother" in 1837 from Claysville, Pennsylvania, an important stage and freight stop on the National Road not far from West Middletown, John complained to Henry about the "vast *betweenity*" of Henry's letters and his brother's meager attempts to keep John current on every aspect of business in Baltimore and on the East Coast. "I would take it as a special, peculiar, and invaluable favor were you to dispatch an 'abstract' once every week or 10 days," John implored his brother.⁶⁵ Henry's "betweenity" often left John, hundreds of miles away, in the dark about markets in Baltimore and the prices that goods from the West would fetch on the Eastern Seaboard. "I expect to be fully posted in the peculiarities of every article in yr. market," he sternly chastised his older brother.⁶⁶ Despite John's occasional criticism of Henry, the two brothers continued their strong fraternal bond, formed in childhood, and developed a close and complementary working relationship, with each brother capitalizing on his particular personality and skills to advance the company. The two brothers differed in temperament. As William Keyser, a Garrett relative, observed, "Henry was an amiable man, full of *bonhomie* and fond of gossip, differing in respect to his brother John, who, as a rule, was rather difficult of approach."⁶⁷

John's trips to the Ohio Territory did more than increase—or at least stabilize—the family business during the financial depression. John's grasp of the minutia of business became evident at this early age. His letters to his father and Henry—

always addressing them as “Dear Sirs”—reveal detailed knowledge of shipping and postage costs and the fluctuations of various commodities in the western markets. Like his father before him, his travels gave him an intimate knowledge of the topography of the land, the people, and the customs of regions far different from the urban Eastern Seaboard. He experienced firsthand the challenges of travel and commerce and, particularly, the laborious job of transporting goods across the mountains. As the *Baltimore Sun* noted, John’s travels to the Ohio Basin early in his career “gave him a thorough business education and a practical knowledge of the vast resources of that Western country to which he was afterwards to contribute so largely in brains and money.”⁶⁸

Will the Rail Road Reach the Ohio in Ten Years?

The Ohio River posed a continuing impediment to reaching the western markets. In winter, the river often froze, and the spring thaws brought rushing waters and floods. “The River still continues closed,” John wrote to his father and Henry in the winter of 1837, “without prospect of navigation opening shortly.”⁶⁹ On his travels in the West, John kept up with news of the B&O and its progress westward. “What is the impression of the Rail Road with you?” he wrote to Henry in 1837. “Will it reach the Ohio in less than ten years?”⁷⁰ By that year, extending westward to the Ohio River was still an elusive goal for the B&O, which continued to be stuck at Harpers Ferry.

John knew the B&O from his happy-go-lucky boyhood, only four or five years earlier, and from Baltimore’s and the nation’s enthusiasm for this new mode of transportation. Perhaps the most exciting amusement for the Garrett boys in their youthful adventures around town had been riding on a horse-drawn “rail road” at an amazing twelve miles per hour out to Ellicott’s Mills, Maryland. And the Mount Clare Shops! There was no other place quite like it anywhere. Built in 1829 on land donated to the B&O by the Carroll family, located just a mile and a half from the spot where the company had been dedicated a year earlier, the small industrial complex bustled with dozens of workers and a fascinating array of buildings: sheds, stables, and facilities to construct and repair the rails and horse-drawn wagons.

After the chartering of the B&O in 1827, the frenzy of the stock sale, and the grand inauguration in 1828, one big question remained: Now what? No one knew how to organize such a new enterprise as a railroad company. From the start, the company encountered internal bickering, organizational weaknesses, and fundamental differences in transportation theory. It was a “fitful start” to the nation’s grandest transportation enterprise, as B&O lawyer John H. B. Latrobe, brother of the B&O’s brilliant engineer Benjamin H. Latrobe II, recalled in a lecture given at the Maryland

Institute in 1868 on the fortieth anniversary year of the dedication of the company.⁷¹ From the internal dissension and bewilderment, however, a new model of corporate management and organization developed, one that would become a “‘textbook’ for the emerging transportation industry.”⁷² As a caveat to its funding, in the B&O’s 1827 charter, the state of Maryland required that each year the company must provide a “clear and distinct statement of affairs.”⁷³ The *American Railroad Journal and Advocate for Internal Improvements* noted that the B&O’s *Annual Reports* “have gone forth as a textbook and their road and workshops have been lecture rooms to thousands who are now practicing and improving upon their experience.”⁷⁴

From the beginning, the B&O developed comprehensive annual reports that benefited not only the company’s shareholders and future investors, but the industry as a whole. The reports contained valuable and detailed information about construction, equipment, the organization of its management, and operating costs. Each principal management member—the president, the masters of transportation and machinery, engineers, architects, accountants, and auditors—provided detailed accounts of their areas of responsibility. Two of the earliest engineers, Jonathan Knight and Benjamin Latrobe II, contributed valuable examples of managerial information in their reports, demonstrating the relationship between “the dollar amount and effects of use on equipment and service.”⁷⁵ The accuracy of railroad annual reports became increasingly important as the industry began to rely on securities markets for funding, and investors looked to the reports to gain insight on a company’s financial health.⁷⁶

Next came the daunting challenge of laying out the route and constructing the tracks. Although surveyors had done exhaustive preliminary studies, no one quite knew how to build a major railroad capable of hauling passengers and freight across the mountains. The founders—none of them civil engineers—took great pains to gauge the terrain. In his lecture, John Latrobe described how founders Alexander Brown, William Patterson, Philip Thomas, and others “made trips backwards and forwards drawn by a single horse to make sure of the exact lay of the land.”⁷⁷ There were no engineering or technological precedents. Other small scale, local railroads were under construction elsewhere, but none faced the same massive obstacles as the B&O, notably 300 miles of track, much of it to be laid through mountainous, twisting terrain lined with sheer cliffs, to reach the Ohio River. Noting the challenges the B&O faced, Latrobe stated: “An English road is virtually a straight road. An American road has curves sometimes [with] as small a radius as two hundred feet.”⁷⁸

Not surprisingly, the B&O could only hope to inch along by trial and error, inventing procedures with each new mile of track. Track material evolved and was made suitable for the terrain; either wood or stone was used as the foundation for the overlay of rail tracks. Within four days of the company’s inauguration, surveyors had

begun marking the right-of-way to connect downtown Baltimore to the thriving town of Ellicott's Mills, thirteen miles due west of Mount Clare and the B&O's first stop. By 1832, the busy mill town needed a faster means to ship its flour and grain, and the new rail line there became known as the Main Stem.

The B&O continued westward, laying out a plan to get to Point of Rocks on the Potomac River, 60 miles away. From that date, railroad technology, out of sheer necessity, unfolded at lightning speed. Engineers constantly experimented with newer, faster, and more economical ways to lay tracks, build rolling stock, and move it along the tracks. From its earliest years, the B&O gained fame for its unique and beautiful architecture. The company hired its first architect in 1831, Jacob Small Jr., as the line extended to Ellicott City—formerly Ellicott's Mills—followed in the 1850s by John R. Niernsee, who built Italianate stations at Frederick, Maryland; Washington, DC; Wheeling (then in Virginia); and Camden Station in Baltimore. The Roman-arched, multispanded Thomas Viaduct over the Patapsco River at Relay, Maryland, designed in 1835 by Benjamin H. Latrobe II, provided a glimpse of future B&O architectural marvels.

Passenger coaches, originally built on stagecoach bodies, were lengthened; roadbeds were repaired; and sharp curves evened out. And the question of motive power was finally resolved. Although steam power was well known when the B&O began construction, it was thought that existing locomotive designs could not operate on B&O tracks' tight curves. As a result, the railroad initially used horses, which severely limited its potential carrying capacity. But a major breakthrough came in 1830, with inventor Peter Cooper's one-ton, steam-powered "Tom Thumb" locomotive, a name given to the engine years later. Cooper, who, along with several investors, had established the nation's first planned industrial area in Baltimore's Canton neighborhood in 1830, was determined to prove that steam could be practically applied to the B&O.⁷⁹

In the beginning, Latrobe recalled in his lecture, "no one dreamed of steam."⁸⁰ Ross Winans, another brilliant locomotive designer, who later invented the B&O's "Winans' Camel," among many other innovations, collaborated with Cooper and later gained fame when asked by Czar Nicholas I to construct Russia's first railroad, connecting what was then the country's capital, St. Petersburg, to Moscow. The "Tom Thumb" spawned railroad lore—for an event that possibly never happened: the race between beast and machine, old and new technologies. As the story goes—and it has many variations—in August 1830, the "Tom Thumb" raced a horse-drawn carriage between Mount Clare and Ellicott's Mills. The steam engine was puffing and chugging valiantly, but its pulley broke and the gray horse pulled ahead to win the showdown. While many cheered at the victory of the old technology, there was no denying the possibilities of the "iron horse." As one commentator noted, "The loser

won.” The race—real or mythological—came to symbolize a watershed moment in the railroad’s history.⁸¹ By 1831, the B&O began receiving a fleet of production-built steam locomotives.

The first adventurous souls climbed aboard a B&O passenger rail car on May 24, 1830, and paid nine cents—the first revenue ever collected by an American railroad company—for the mile and a half journey westward from the Mount Clare Shops. They sat on seats strapped to the railroad car and swayed precariously with every curve in the road. Netting surrounded the seats to keep passengers from falling overboard.⁸² Within six months, passengers could travel to Ellicott’s Mills—the first railroad station in the United States—in ninety minutes. They might have been jostled, but more than likely they were amazed and thrilled. Riding on a train was unlike any previous experience for Americans. One passenger wrote of the exhilaration of the “lightening flash” speed, as compared with the “slow dawning” of a stagecoach. Unfortunately, that brilliant flash also included deafening engine noise, spewing ash and cinders, and the earsplitting grating and squealing of the iron wheels. Even watching a train chug by at twelve to twenty miles an hour was a wonder to behold. “I saw today for the first time a Rail Way car,” an early rider noted in 1835. “What an object of wonder! How marvelous it is in every particular. It appears a thing of life. I cannot describe the strange sensation produced on seeing the train of cars come up.”⁸³ In June 1833, President Andrew Jackson rode the B&O from Relay, Maryland, to Mount Clare Depot, the first American president to ride on a railroad.

As exciting as the first railroads appeared, their enormity, power, and race toward modernity stirred fear among some doubters. Despite being an early advocate for a transcontinental railroad, Asa Whitney, cousin of cotton gin inventor, Eli Whitney, wrote of the railroads’ great transformative potential, which he feared would not always be for good: “The mind goes with all this. It speculates, theorizes & measures all things by locomotive speed, where will it end? Can it be happy? I fear not.”⁸⁴

By the mid-1830s, Robert Garrett, despite much anxiety, began sending small shipments on the B&O. But he kept an eye on train safety and stayed in close contact with B&O president Philip Thomas about the company’s safety problems. Railroad accidents for passengers, and particularly for workers, occurred all too frequently, and Congress had taken notice, demanding accountability and regular reports. The first rail passengers might have enjoyed the “lightening flash” speed of a train as opposed to the “slow dawning” of a stagecoach, but they often paid a deadly price. A passenger could be killed by hopping aboard a moving train or, worse, simply by sitting still. Head-on collisions were common, and wooden passenger cars could burst into a thousand pieces on impact. Coal-burning railway car stoves often exploded, trapping and incinerating passengers. Escaping serious injury after a train derailment in the mountains, one English passenger on the B&O did not even

bother to publicly complain, writing, “Accidents on railways are thought so little of in America it is useless to remonstrate.”⁸⁵

In 1838, Thomas wrote to Robert Garrett concerning the US House of Representatives’ latest inquiry into accidents and fatalities on the B&O. “Already several persons have been killed on the Road and on one occasion the Engines were thrown off the Track over a very high bank when driving a train of cars containing nearly 100 passengers,” Thomas stated. Luckily, the engine detached at the last minute. “Had the carriages followed the Engine many persons would have become maimed and a great number perhaps killed.” Thomas explained to Robert that many accidents resulted from “high embankments” and “the curves that are unavoidable from the nature of the countryside.”⁸⁶ The day after writing this letter, Thomas faced the unpleasant task of traveling to Washington, DC, to testify before Congress regarding his company’s accidents.

Despite the dangers, word about the B&O’s good wages quickly spread among laborers looking for work. “If anyone wants to work he can earn a good living as a day laborer,” Peter Anas, a wage earner newly emigrated from Germany, wrote in 1831. “The people who came with us [aboard ship] found jobs and earn 75 cents a day—they are building a railroad from Baltimore to Ohio.”⁸⁷ From the start, the B&O established a policy prohibiting workers from “the destructive and demoralizing effects of ardent spirits,” which the company thought would produce “riots and other flagrant disorders.”⁸⁸

By the spring of 1832, the Main Stem had extended to Point of Rocks, Maryland, on the Potomac River, and within two years it had reached Harpers Ferry. Here, the B&O encountered major problems in getting over the river. Spring floods often destroyed the old wooden bridge, and sharp curves at either end of the bridge presented engineering challenges. While reaching Harpers Ferry was an impressive milestone, it fell far short of expectations for the railroad to make it to Cumberland, Maryland—more than twice the distance—by that year. Cumberland, the official eastern terminus of the National Road, thrived as a commercial center for coal and was an important goal for the B&O, since it was halfway to the Ohio River. But getting to Cumberland presented the greatest challenges yet to the young company, and crossing the wide Potomac River offered even more engineering obstacles. There was none better to meet the challenge than the B&O’s topographical engineer, Jonathan Knight, a West Point graduate and an experienced railroad and turnpike builder, and his assistant, Benjamin H. Latrobe II. Together, they constructed stone bridges and beautifully engineered viaducts. Far more menacing than mountainous declivities, however, was the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company, which brought suit demanding that the B&O not build west of Harpers Ferry until the canal reached Cumberland.

As the first trains chugged their way northwest out of Baltimore on the Main Stem and out to the mountains, the B&O soon opened a second line, this one south from Baltimore to the nation's capital. In 1833, the Maryland state legislature chartered the B&O's Washington Branch, which, like the Main Stem, was funded both publicly and privately. The new line officially opened in 1835. Passengers had the distinction of riding on railroad cars pulled by grasshopper locomotives—four-wheeled, elongated, vertical-boiler engines, with a horizontal beam and connecting rods—appropriately named “Thomas Jefferson,” “James Madison,” “James Monroe,” and “J. Q. Adams,” when the first train service to the nation's capital began.⁸⁹ The trains traveled south out of Baltimore, heading over the Patapsco River on the nation's first and largest multispanded masonry railroad bridge, the Thomas Viaduct, named after the B&O's first president, and then into “Washington City.” The new branch paid off immediately, with freight and passenger profits soon outpacing those on the Main Stem.⁹⁰ At the time, no one could have imagined how critical this forty-mile Baltimore–Washington, DC, stretch of the B&O would become to the nation in the next decades.

More pressing, though, the B&O faced financial shortfalls, a problem that would constantly plague the company. Freight revenues slowly increased over the railroad's first years, but not enough to keep up with the tremendous capitalization needed for rolling stock and major building projects, such as costly viaducts and the expense of blasting through mountains. The Panic of 1837 brought the decade-old B&O precariously near insolvency. The timing could not have been worse. The B&O's 1827 charter mandated reaching Cumberland within ten years, but that goal now seemed impossible. Construction on the line to Washington, DC, had exceeded original cost estimates, and ongoing maintenance on the Main Stem to Point of Rocks, combined with the economic downturn of 1837, left B&O coffers empty. Desperate, the company applied to Maryland for a \$3 million stock subscription, which the state reluctantly agreed to advance, with the caveat that the B&O settle its territorial disputes with the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal Company. With a little arm twisting of European investors by B&O president Louis McLane, Philip Thomas's successor in 1836, the railroad finally had enough funding to move forward. “Stumbling along, with many a fall and many a bruise, [it] made headway,” John Latrobe later noted, “and the Company's errors imparted lessons of wisdom.”⁹¹ And that wisdom brought optimism for the young company.

Despite its engineering and financial obstacles, Robert Garrett was more convinced than ever of the efficacy of the B&O and began increasing his shipments by rail. John and Henry Garrett, too, had proven themselves. In 1839, their hard-driving father rewarded his two sons by making them full partners in the family business, renamed Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated. Robert Garrett, then

57 years old, had been building his business for nearly forty years and now began bowing out, ready for his sons to fully engage in the company. RG&S exemplified the trend toward forming commercial partnerships—familial more often than not—that became imperative in enlarging and assuring the constancy of businesses.⁹² In the years ahead, John, with his brother and father, would vastly expand the family firm. By 1840, the Garrett empire included banking, investing, and what was always the firm's primary interest, transportation—moving passengers and freight to all parts of the eastern United States and shipping goods internationally. As B&O workers dug and blasted their way westward through the Allegheny Mountains, bringing transportation changes with each mile, Robert and his sons stepped up their firm's involvement with the railroad, no longer just as customers, but as decision makers at the highest levels. The Garretts would be integral in helping the B&O attain the challenging but imperative goal of connecting with the profitable markets of the expanding Ohio Basin.

THREE

An Era of Fine Pickings

1840–1855

JOHN GARRETT, now fully immersed in one of Baltimore's most successful financial houses, quickly demonstrated that he had the Midas touch. His father had matured and started his business as the new country was unfolding westward beyond the Atlantic coast and spilling into the Ohio Territory. As John took his position in RG&S in the 1840s, he saw before him even more financial opportunities and a much larger canvas on which to imprint the Garrett signature. He came of age in the business world in a rapidly expanding country, whose boundaries would soon stretch past the Alleghenies that had challenged his father; across the Great Plains to another, more formidable range, the Rockies; and beyond. By the 1850s, Thomas Jefferson's dream of a continental nation extending from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans was becoming a reality, with thirty-three states in the Union and additional territories purchased or annexed.

As the Depression of 1837 ebbed in the next decade, the nation rebounded with renewed energy, patriotism, and profit-taking zeal. Journalist John O'Sullivan captured the belief in the "manifest destiny" of the United States in a series of articles. Reviving John Winthrop's 1630 mandate to create a "city upon a hill" in the New World, O'Sullivan gave his ideology a name in a 1845 column in the *New York Morning News*: "Our manifest destiny is to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our multiplying millions" and "to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man."¹ The term was meant to address disputes over the annexation of Texas, but many Americans quickly interpreted it as a God-given right—in fact, a moral imperative—to expand economically and ideologically across the continent. And the railroads, O'Sullivan predicted, would be the nation's "skeletal framework" that would propel the nation's providential calling.²

John Garrett may not have known the term "manifest destiny"—it did not enter the popular lexicon until years later—but he shared the tacit belief that ambitious and aggressive businesses such as RG&S were entitled to get what they wanted—for

themselves and for the greater good of expanding the nation's "divine destiny." John's youthful, unabashed enthusiasm combined with his father's wisdom to provide the perfect catalyst to make that happen. "Considerable wealth followed in the wake of all [their] activity, and the firm could likewise take comfort from the fact that it has adhered unswervingly to a policy of advancing and promoting commerce of Baltimore," an observer noted.³ In the two decades after John and his brother joined the firm, the Garrett family's personal wealth exceeded \$1 million.⁴ In an era of wildly unequal fortunes, the richest 1 percent of the population owned 50 percent of the wealth, and the upper 4 percent, slightly more than 80 percent of the wealth.⁵ By the 1850s, the Garretts ranked in that elite circle and counted themselves among the approximately three hundred families with million-dollar fortunes in the United States.⁶

The 1840s and much of the 1850s offered "an era of fine pickings," and John Garrett found the family business to be the perfect vehicle from which to choose a dizzying array of profitable investments and commercial enterprises, both domestic and international.⁷ But first he had to find office space in the Garrett warehouse's counting room, now packed with an increasing number of clerks, who were needed to keep up with the workload. In the first years after John and Henry joined the firm, correspondence to RG&S more than tripled in volume, from a few dozen letters a month to upward of 250–300. But no matter how cramped his quarters, John thought big. He began focusing on investing and keeping up with new business trends, which yielded greater profits for the firm. The new direction for the company was far riskier than hauling beeswax and whiskey across the National Road, and Robert was worried. "The old gentleman begins to scratch his head & talk about blue times & putting in sail, etc.," John reported to Henry.⁸ The "old gentleman" had good reason to be concerned, having ridden the economic roller coaster for four decades. "I hope for your sake, for my sake, and for God's sake that you will snug up our entirety," Robert cautioned John, trying to curb his son's enthusiasm. "I have often told you," Robert hurriedly wrote in unusually sloppy spelling, "that sutch a state of things could not always last, in my opinion the[y] will gradually increse untill a tremendous crash."⁹

Despite his eagerness, John had to stay levelheaded, especially with his father looking over his shoulder, and he never ventured down perilous financial paths that could doom the family firm. He learned to be methodical and cautious, peering into every detail and transaction of the company. "Mr. John Garrett has been credited with being entirely practical and in no sense a theorist," the *New York Times* later wrote of him.¹⁰ He kept a close eye on Wall Street, now bustling in activity with the easing of the financial depression, a brisk national economic expansion, and investments in the never-ending network of railroads that were fueling the economy.

As his business confidence grew, John seldom missed an opportunity to instruct customers on exactly who was in charge. He could be especially testy—showing an early streak of arrogance and bravado—with customers he felt had not brought an anticipated profit to a business arrangement or who accused the firm of shiftiness. A customer on the receiving end of one of John's impatient letters was told to cease and desist a "reiterated erroneous claim"; John reminded another not to fault "our duty as agents, *which I think we know*."¹¹ He complained to one customer that a shipment of cheese—although spoiled—did not fetch the optimum price and should have been "overhauled."¹² His fanaticism with detail also had its benefits. He once mailed a customer a three-cent stamp that the company owed him.

With John and Henry involved in the firm, RG&S slowly evolved into a major financial institution. The Garretts' first venture was to buy state securities, and, with each investment, they showed an uncanny understanding of when to buy, sell, or hold. They bought Pennsylvania 5 percent bonds at 49½ in August 1843, shrewdly selling them eight months later for a \$1,150 profit.¹³ That first foray worked well and bolstered their financial finesse. Within a few years, the firm made significantly larger investments in Illinois and Indiana bonds that later netted a sizable profit of \$40,000.¹⁴ With the railroads' rapid expansion and by calculating the industry's future profitability, the Garretts became very astute at buying and selling railroad bonds, delicate transactions that required intricate timing and the right connections. The process was formulaic—and usually successful. RG&S would take thousands of dollars in a particular railroad's mortgage bonds and make them available to that railroad by borrowing from Maryland or Baltimore banks; sell the bonds to investment contacts in Baltimore or in money markets on the East Coast or abroad; and use the unsold bonds as collateral to extend bank loans or discount loans to companies.¹⁵ Locally, they invested in the Canton Company, owned by Peter Cooper, the inventor of the "Tom Thumb." RG&S's significant holdings earned John a seat on that company's board of directors in 1849, the sons' first elected position on a corporate board.

Although striking out in new investment directions, RG&S did not abandon its original western trade, which had provided the company's financial and organizational foundation for half a century. Transportation and commerce continued to be the firm's bread and butter. Henry temporarily relocated to New Orleans to open a branch of the family firm and build business at that important port. During his stay in that lively, international city, the high-spirited bachelor wrote to his brother that he found the city "charming and immoral," far more liberated than Baltimore and much to his liking.¹⁶ No doubt Henry did not want his stern Presbyterian father to see that particular letter.

Our City Has Particular Advantages for Foreign Trade

By the late 1840s, RG&S became more profitable than ever, thanks in large part to England's 1846 repeal of its Corn Laws, which had restricted imports of farm produce. Trade with America's western markets skyrocketed. Britain desperately needed to increase grain, tobacco, and meat imports, particularly to feed its starving Irish population, hit hard by the potato famine. British cargo ships sat empty in Baltimore's harbor, awaiting grain shipments from the American hinterlands to be carried abroad. The Garretts happily assisted in ameliorating Britain's shortages by filling the ships' holds with Garrett consignments. Many Americans feared that the rush to export so much valuable grain would deplete domestic supplies, leaving little for home consumption.¹⁷ RG&S exported so many goods that John joked to Henry about the firm's continuous "line of packets" making their way across the Atlantic to England.¹⁸

Rumors of wars, both foreign and domestic, occasionally caused concern for the Garrett men, but they usually managed to find the bright side—and a profit. The Mexican War in the late 1840s opened another door of opportunity, this time in lucrative government contracts. For two years, RG&S sent more than \$8,000 worth of foodstuffs through the US Commissary Department for troops fighting in Texas and later in Mexico.¹⁹ The Garretts also struck their own mother lode in the 1848 California Gold Rush, not in mining, but by sending much-needed produce to San Francisco to be shipped up and down the West Coast. Although formidable, the 7,000-mile ocean voyage from Baltimore, around Cape Horn, to San Francisco did not deter the Garretts; in fact, it proved to be opportune. "Our city seems by nature to have particular advantages for the foreign provision trade and there exists no reason why it should not exist, except for want of capital for such long adventures," John wrote.²⁰

This new enterprise provided more opportunities for ocean shipping. Building on its original mission to serve as brokers between Baltimore and western markets on the National Road, the firm expanded by serving as agents between shipowners and shippers. RG&S filled ships' holds with goods from other merchants at a specific rate, in return for a commission—and the Garretts always insisted on being paid in gold. This venture soon evolved into RG&S chartering its own fleet of vessels. The firm would pay the owner of a ship a fixed sum and then would charge higher rates to shippers who wanted cargo space. John found this arrangement especially lucrative, boasting to Henry after one particularly profitable trip, "We will probably pocket \$700 & oblige all parties."²¹ By the 1850s, the Garretts again profited from war through large army contracts to ship supplies to troops during the Third Seminole War in Florida, in which the federal government ousted the indigenous Native Americans from their ancestral lands after a half century of fighting.

The Garretts soon realized that simply chartering ships limited their profit-making opportunities, so they built their own fleet. In 1850, RG&S financed the construction of the 733-ton steamer *Monumental City*, the largest ocean-going steamship built up to that time in Baltimore. Henry suggested that the ship could serve as a US mail carrier between Panama and other Pacific ports. He wrote to a friend in Washington with the proposal, but nothing came of it; more than likely it disappeared into the bureaucratic ether. The Garretts expanded their fleet, buying a square-rigger, the *Samuel Hicks*, which was lost with all hands on her first voyage to England in 1850. The Garretts, however, were well insured against such catastrophes.²² They also bought the *Atlas*, sending her to California with a cargo of white pine and returning from Peru with holds filled with guano. Such ventures earned Baltimore the status of “guano capital of the United States,” a not unkind distinction, considering the substance’s use in the manufacture of gunpowder and its contribution to the amount of fertilizer needed for the nation’s increasing farmland.

With more international shipping, the Garretts strengthened their business connections outside the United States. American merchants who hoped to get ahead had to expand and solidify ties abroad by forming “international locking partnerships.”²³ RG&S struck deals with importers in Liverpool, London, and Glasgow. The firm’s most important relationship, however, was with George Peabody, the most prominent American financier in Europe. Robert Garrett and Peabody had come to Baltimore around the same time and had become friends and business associates, a relationship that proved to be invaluable. Peabody was a born financier and dealmaker. At age 20, he came to Baltimore from his hometown of Danvers, Massachusetts (with a brief stopover in Washington, DC), to form a banking partnership with Elisha Riggs.

After earning the first of his many millions in Baltimore, in 1837 Peabody moved to London, where he opened a banking house to secure European financing to help American businesses through the Panic of 1837. He focused on buying and selling American stocks, particularly state bonds. He became a trusted agent of RG&S in expanding that firm’s markets for produce and other merchandise in Europe and brokered deals for the Garretts for coffee from South America, which had become an important component of the Garretts’ trade. He regularly sent newspapers and other circulars to keep the Garretts apprised of European markets and, in turn, the Garretts sent Peabody similar information about American commerce.

By the early 1850s, Peabody’s London enterprise had grown to the point where he needed a business partner. He wanted his company to continue exclusively with American businesses, so he required an American partner. He met with several well-known financiers, but Junius Morgan, a successful banker and merchant from Massachusetts, especially impressed him. In the spring of 1853, Morgan and his 18-year-old

son, John Pierpont—called Pierpont by his family and eventually J. Pierpont Morgan by the rest of the world—met with Peabody while traveling in England. Morgan’s integrity and, perhaps, his Massachusetts background persuaded Peabody to hire him.²⁴ Peabody’s decision proved to be a fortuitous move that eventually spawned a global financial empire: the House of Morgan. As Peabody began concentrating on philanthropy over the next few years, he slowly turned the business over to Junius Morgan. The name of the firm remained the same—George Peabody and Company—and it continued to do business in sales and purchases of stock, foreign exchanges, banking and credits, sales of American railroad bonds through European banks, and the execution of orders for railroad iron.²⁵

As an early advocate of American railroads, Peabody time and time again bailed out the fledgling B&O by finding financing as the company struggled to reach the Ohio River. In 1853, he wrote to RG&S from London, warning of the war in the Crimea and observing that the “Russian dispute is hurting railroad bonds abroad”; he discouraged the Garretts from sending additional bonds to sell.²⁶ By the late 1850s, the Garrett-Peabody connection prospered, to the point where RG&S wrote that the company wanted to expand its account with Peabody. Peabody never married, but he enjoyed the attention and respect of one very important woman: Queen Victoria, who greatly admired the successful businessman and philanthropist.

Leaving no profitable stone unturned, RG&S began investing heavily in real estate. Robert had held on to the family farm in West Middletown—although not willingly. At the urging of his brother William, Robert had tried to sell it, but the buildings needed costly repairs, which he was reluctant to make.²⁷ As settlers began pouring into Kentucky, RG&S bought cheap land, acting as a land agent for East Coast buyers eager to purchase acreage in the western territories.

By the 1840s, the firm looked closer to home for opportunities. In 1845, RG&S cashed in on the hotel boom, buying and overhauling Baltimore’s Eutaw House Hotel in the most fashionable part of town. The hotel boasted 125 feet of frontage on Eutaw Street and was run by Captain Robert Coleman, “the elegant master of New York’s Astor House,” who had decamped from New York City.²⁸ The Eutaw House competed with Baltimore’s upscale Barnum Hotel, as did the Garretts’ next venture, the Howard House. The swanky Eutaw House attracted more than upscale guests, however. Soon after opening, a group of cadets from the newly established US Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, requested to rent basement rooms for their visit to Baltimore. The midshipmen pleaded their case by stating, “As for good behavior, we will assure you there will be no fault to find.”²⁹

Hotels with indoor plumbing, gaslights, and steam heat sprang up around the city—a good investment for smart businesspeople. Baltimore’s hotel boom reflected a larger tourism trend in the country, as traveling salesmen, foreign visitors eager to

take a look at the new United States, and mobile Americans passed through Baltimore by rail, stagecoach, horseback, or on foot. Baltimore had to keep up. New York City boasted the magnificent five-story Astor House, and in Boston, the Tremont House dominated the harbor. In President Jackson's democratic America, the new hotels flew in the face of European class-bound conventions, as guests of all backgrounds dined together at the table d'hôte. Jacksonian egalitarianism extended just so far, however; hotels did not open their doors to blacks, whether free or enslaved, and to women traveling on their own. By the end of the decade, RG&S's real estate holdings topped an impressive \$1.5 million.³⁰

The Garretts' rich repository of profits from smart business moves in the 1850s allowed the family firm to expand its banking services by extending credit, which helped importers, retailers, and other merchants meet the demands of their businesses in meeting payrolls and covering drafts. Robert's position as a director in the Western Bank of Baltimore let him borrow money at low rates, allowing RG&S to then offer loans at higher rates, thus making a tidy profit for the family firm. RG&S also widened their local investments to include the Baltimore Water Company; the Baltimore Gas-Light Company; the Union Manufacturing Company, a prosperous cotton firm; the Merchants' Shot Tower; the Merchants' Fire Insurance Company; the Susquehanna and Tidewater Canal; and the Ocean Mutual Insurance Company.³¹ Besides John's directorship in Peter Cooper's Canton Company and his father's seat on the board of the Western Bank of Baltimore, the Garretts also served on the boards of other companies in which they had invested.

RG&S often faced the unpleasant but unavoidable task of tracking down customer accounts in arrears. The job proved to be challenging, since many of the firm's customers lived hundreds of miles away, often on the other side of the Alleghenies. In a move that one day would prove to be immensely beneficial to John, in 1846, RG&S hired a young attorney from an eastern Ohio law firm to bring legal action to settle a debt with a creditor. That ambitious lawyer was Edwin M. Stanton, and John soon formed a strong friendship with the man who would become secretary of war during the Civil War and a much-needed ally as John navigated the B&O through that conflict.

Everywhere John Garrett looked, opportunity knocked. The population was exploding; commerce was expanding in all directions and becoming easier to manage; transportation had improved by midcentury; and markets were booming. Possibilities for investments fell from heaven. Government and financial regulations, such as they were, did little to inhibit American commerce; in fact, federal and state laws did everything possible to encourage business. Samuel F. B. Morse's electrical telegraph, beginning with his first transmission, sent in 1844 along a line that paralleled B&O tracks, did no less than revolutionize all aspects of business and communication.

No longer would merchants and financiers such as the Garretts have to rely on correspondence delivered by stage, rail, or courier. Communication became virtually instantaneous.

With each new venture, and each expansion of the firm's business, John Garrett honed his knowledge of and firsthand experience with developing transportation and commercial trends on domestic and international horizons. His childhood years of sitting at his father's knee, absorbing the details of the family business, followed by his immersion in the firm at age 17, gave him an expert's eye and judgment regarding commerce and transportation. Nothing escaped his close assessment of how to ship goods more efficiently and profitably and, as importantly, how to strike a deal. He discerned that shipping goods on flatboats into Philadelphia's harbor could make a slightly greater profit than sending wares on steamships, owing to city fire regulations prohibiting the docking of steamships near the city and "thus the additional costs incurred when unloading to bring produce to market."³²

By the 1850s, the Garretts had become leading financiers in the emerging and often haphazard national economy, and they eagerly dove into any potentially profitable financial venture. Robert's humble commission business, which started with pack-horses lumbering over the National Road three decades earlier, had grown into an internationally renowned financial house. It provided excellent training for a future railroad president.

Mr. and Mrs. John W. Garrett

Luckily for John, there was life beyond the doors of the family business. An 1845 portrait of 25-year-old John by Vermont artist Oliver Tarbell Eddy reveals a young man who had come into his own: strikingly attractive and virile, with dark hair, a steady gaze, and a strong jaw. John was described as "handsome, impressive, and vigorous."³³ There were no signs of the shyness and ill health that had plagued him in adolescence. He exuded confidence and boldness, and perhaps a hint of cockiness, already having several business coups to his credit. His "lady crazy" days, as the Garretts' housekeeper had described John's youthful flings, came to an abrupt end when he met Rachel Ann Harrison.³⁴ Rachel—often called Rit or Ann—was one of ten children of Ann and Thomas Harrison. Her father was a prominent merchant on Baltimore Street and a member of Baltimore's city council.³⁵ Rachel, sophisticated and elegant, ranked as "one of Baltimore's most gracious ladies" and was known to be "gentle and kindly in manner" and "a lady of most amiable disposition."³⁶

Unlike Henry, who remained a confirmed bachelor for life and did not see the need to burden his *bon vivant* lifestyle with serious romantic entanglements, or Lizzie, who married late in life, John eagerly took the marital plunge at age 26. He

and Rachel were wed in 1846 at the bride's home on Cathedral Street, where Rachel had been born on January 23, 1823. John presented his bride with a ruby-and-diamond wedding ring, and her father gave her a gold bracelet set with diamonds and pearls.³⁷ Henry wrote to his mother, light-heartedly extending his sympathies to the newly-weds by declaring, "Poor souls, how I pity them."³⁸ To all who knew them, John and Rachel exemplified a match made in heaven, compatible on every level.

Rachel worked hard to live up to society's expectations. Sarah Josepha Hale, the wildly popular and influential editor of both *Godey's Lady's Book* and the equally instructive *Ladies' Garland*, which featured "literature, instruction, and amusement," advised well-to-do antebellum women to make their home "a refuge from the vexations and embarrassments of business, an enchanting repose from exertion by the interchange of affection for her husband."³⁹ But while the required feminine traits of cheerfulness and loyalty might have been part of Rachel's innate personality—she was described as "charming, hospitable, and a brilliant conversationalist"—she proved to be far from submissive or subservient.⁴⁰ In the turbulent years that lay ahead, Rachel would become her husband's steadying ballast and, many said, his strong-willed equal partner and "right hand," providing comfort, guidance, and succor to her beleaguered husband during the family and business crises that unfolded with unwelcome regularity.⁴¹

John and Rachel moved into a modest home on Fayette Street in Baltimore, not far from Robert and Elizabeth's home and a stone's throw from the Garrett warehouse on Howard Street. This was not the wealthiest part of town. By the 1840s, many well-to-do Baltimoreans had left "Old Town"—East Baltimore Street between Jones Fall and Central Avenue—and moved in two directions: northward to Mount Vernon Place, which, in the next decade, would become an aristocratic enclave; and westward, to the new, twenty-two-block "suburb" of Franklin Square, "one of the most desirable places to live in Baltimore."⁴²

On April 9, 1847, John and Rachel's first child, Robert—referred to as Robert II and called Bob in his later years—was born. Three other children quickly followed. Thomas Harrison, named in honor of his maternal grandfather and called Harry by family and friends or, more formally, T. Harrison, arrived on February 11, 1849. Henry, born in 1851 and named after his uncle, suffered from undisclosed maladies since his birth, and little is known of his life. Mary Elizabeth was born on March 5, 1854—"on the Sabbath," her father noted in the family bible.⁴³ By the time of their daughter's birth, John and Rachel had moved to Franklin Square. They joined an enthusiastic crowd of similarly upwardly mobile Baltimoreans fleeing from the gritty, crowded city to the bucolic neighborhood: dry goods magnate R. M. Sutton; Judge Henry Stockbridge; and Augustus Bradford, who would become Maryland's governor during the Civil War.

Even while construction was underway in the early 1840s, the stylish new suburb, with its grand residences, stirred a frenzy of interest. The *Baltimore Sun* reported that on one spring day alone, 3,300 curious onlookers jammed into the square, looking in amazement at the homes. And no wonder. Each house reportedly cost a required—and exorbitant—\$10,000. The *Sun* added that the townhouses were “much handsomer than any yet finished in this city, and [displayed] the pure Italianate style of architecture.”⁴⁴

John and Rachel built an elegant, three-story, semidetached townhouse on fashionable Delaware Row, at 27 Calhoun Street on the corner of Lexington Street, in an area soon to be known as Garrett Park, named in honor of the family’s rising stature in the city.⁴⁵ Their new home included the most up-to-date amenities and aesthetic finishes: floor-to-ceiling parlor windows to allow “full means of light and ventilation”; bathrooms and water closets; “lofty ceilings, colored marble mantels, and dressing or retiring rooms”; and, for their young family, upper floors “devoted to apartments for children, nurseries, servants’ bed rooms, & etc.” Franklin Square townhouses encircled a graceful park “with its fountains and seats, making it ‘the most inviting place of rural beauty in the city . . . attracting numerous companies of ladies and gentlemen to its pleasant walks and shady bowers.’”⁴⁶ The rural beauty and tranquility of the square was shattered one night when the Garretts’ house caught on fire; the exact date is unknown. A neighbor, George H. Steuart, dramatically rescued the children; Steuart gained fame after the Civil War for dressing in his Confederate general’s uniform and regaling the neighborhood children with war stories.⁴⁷ Luckily, the damage to the Garrett house was minimal.

At Franklin Square, life in the Garrett household took on an everyday routine, with plenty of good-hearted joking between the sons, as there had been in John’s youth. Occasional squabbles arose, with Robert II and Harry alternately harassing and ignoring their little sister Mary and generally excluding her from their more exciting big brother adventures. “I was five years younger than my second brother,” Mary later wrote, “and had no sisters and knew few children.”⁴⁸ Mary’s problems proved to be far graver than loneliness, however. As an infant, she suffered a serious injury when a nurse let her fall. “When I was about eight months old,” she recalled, “a serious trouble with the bone of the right ankle developed, which seriously affected my general health.”⁴⁹ Rachel immediately took her baby to Cape May, New Jersey, for treatment at a fashionable Victorian spa. Mary slowly improved, but she had to wear leg braces until early adolescence. Mary would later write that such adversities made her “a very strong child.”⁵⁰

The infirmities of their third son, Henry, were seldom mentioned, except in occasional family correspondence. In 1855, John wrote to his mother that “Henry was not talking much, but moves around and is more active.”⁵¹ As children, Robert II

and Harry went to private schools, as their father and uncle had, attending the Dahl School in Baltimore and later the Quakers' Friends School in Providence, Rhode Island. As a youngster, Mary more than likely was tutored at home. Early on, she displayed an innate intellectual curiosity and a thirst for the same formal education afforded her brothers. "I read fluent Eng. [English] before I was six & read everything I could get my hands on from that time on, good, bad & indifferent by sunlight, lamplight, or firelight as long as I could see the paper," Mary later wrote.⁵² But she had poor vision, and seeing the pages often proved to be a problem. Robert II and Harry teased her about getting glasses. Finally, "no longer [able] to stand the suffering of not being able to see properly," Mary appealed to her father, who relented and allowed her to get "spectacles."⁵³

The robust and rambunctious extended Garrett clan now included three generations: "Old Robert"—as the family affectionately called him after the addition of a grandson named in his honor—and "revered Mama" Elizabeth, who provided the foundation for the family; their children Henry, John, and Lizzie; John's youthful brood of four; and Robert's grandchildren from his first marriage. Robert's daughter by his first marriage, Sarah Margaret, married George P. Rieman in 1830 in West Middletown, and they had four children. By 1840, both Sarah and George Rieman had died, and their two youngest children, Elizabeth and "little George," came to live with Robert and Elizabeth Garrett in Baltimore at the ages of about 5 and 8.⁵⁴ By that year, John and Henry had become full partners in RG&S, and their sister Lizzie was seventeen. Numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and in-laws spread across Maryland, Pennsylvania, and points farther west rounded out the unusually close and compatible family.

As if Robert's and his sons' frenetic business travels were not enough, the extended family loved to pack up and go. By the 1840s and 1850s, a dozen or so Garretts could be found vacationing together for weeks at a time at fashionable resorts: White Sulphur Springs (now known as The Greenbrier), in what was then Virginia; Cape May, New Jersey; or Saratoga Springs and Niagara Falls in New York. The trips allowed the women to connect with long-distance friends and swap ideas about their charities and civic improvement, while the men talked shop and sealed business deals. Never leaving anything to chance, Robert always made sure one of his sons stayed behind in Baltimore to keep an eye on business. Lizzie and Henry enjoyed a leisurely seven-month tour of Europe from July 1852 through February 1853, sailing from New York City on the newest, top-of-the-line steamship from the Collins Company, *Atlantic*. Henry never missed an opportunity to combine business and pleasure, and he spent much of the trip contacting RG&S business associates, particularly Peabody.⁵⁵

When apart, John Garrett and his siblings exchanged warm, humorous, and newsy letters—as did the whole family. Their mother Elizabeth wrote often and dotted her

letters with complaints of minor ailments—not uncommon for the era. Intestinal distress placed high on the list of frequent topics for the travelers. In a letter addressed to “Sons and all the rest,” Elizabeth bemoaned, “Water acts differently with us—it has a constipatory effect.”⁵⁶

Aside from travels and in his home on Franklin Square, John found another “refuge from the vexations and embarrassments of business” at Lansdowne, the family’s farm in Baltimore County. Once an active ore-mining region, Lansdowne provided rich soil and scenic vistas. Farms dotted the area, as did small lakes and ponds filled by underground springs from abandoned mining pits. Never far removed from his rural heritage in West Middletown, Robert had bought the farm years earlier and converted it into the family’s private playground. When possible, the family piled into their carriages and made the short journey from downtown Baltimore to the pastoral countryside southwest of Baltimore, where the whole boisterous clan gathered. The children enjoyed the open fields and clean air, frolicking with the dogs, riding horses, and chasing pigeons and mice.⁵⁷ John inherited a love of the land from his father and began to hone his interests in agriculture and husbandry. Unfortunately, in the years ahead, he would find little time to indulge in such pleasurable pursuits.

The Race to the Ohio River

1852–1858

AS THE JOHN GARRETTS and RG&S prospered during the 1850s, the railroad industry, too, began to mature, entering a robust period of expansion and showing early signs of the relentless and ruthless competition that was to come after the Civil War. American railroads were still developing, but they showed every sign of being the transportation system of the future. To no one's surprise, the B&O's founding three decades earlier incited "railroad fever" beyond anyone's wildest expectations. The increasing regularity and relative certainty of the nation's growing railroad system allowed agriculture and industry to boom; farmers and merchants to the west begged for more rail lines.¹ In the 1830s, the growing might of the railroads had seemed fascinating, yet fearsome, to many, but by midcentury, most Americans embraced their potential. In 1855, Walt Whitman captured the nation's love affair in "To a Locomotive in Winter": "thy black cylindrical body . . . swelling pant and roar . . . thy great protruding headlight . . . thy long, pale, floating vapor pennants . . . thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following. . . Launch'd o'er the prairies wide—across the lakes, to the free skies, unpent, and glad, and strong."²

Over the years, Robert Garrett and other interested Baltimoreans watched in astonishment—and alarm—as the B&O's humble transportation experiment opened the floodgates of the most intense decades of industrial competition yet seen in American enterprise, an explosive era of expansion and unprecedented hubris in American industry, much of it driven by the overextension and debt of the railroads. As the railroading industry grew, so did the Garretts' financial interests in it, and they expanded on their earlier successful investments in state and railroad bonds. In 1850, a quick turnaround investment in Erie Railroad bonds, purchased at \$85 and sold four months later at \$98, brought another profit to the firm.³

After his initial involvement with helping the B&O through the iron tariff crisis in 1828 and his first modest stock purchases, Robert kept a close eye on the company's progress, occasionally corresponding with Philip Thomas and later B&O

presidents. Robert had experimented with shipping freight via the B&O to Harpers Ferry and found the line preferable to transporting goods on the turnpikes by his fleet of Conestoga wagons, and he gradually increased RG&S's business with the B&O. In turn, RG&S, by relying more on the B&O for its shipping business, became increasingly important to the rail company. The firm invested in and sold B&O bonds through its wide network of western outlets, ensuring a future for the chronically financially strapped railroad—and, as importantly, for RG&S.

The Garretts and other investors needed to have unlimited patience with the B&O's uneven, and often halting, westward progression. The line had lurched forward since John Garrett's 1837 wishful thinking about reaching the Ohio River. In 1842, with much fanfare, B&O tracks finally extended to Cumberland, Maryland, at the eastern base of the Allegheny Mountains, four years and endless impediments after the original goal of 1838. Cumberland, 178 miles northwest of Baltimore, provided a much-needed psychological boost, for it lay at the Eastern Watershed, a geographical demarcation where the mountains' rivers and streams ran westward, signaling the hopeful direction for the railroad. Cumberland had served as an important commercial junction on westward thoroughfares, and reaching the mountain town meant that the B&O could capture stagecoach and wagon traffic. It had taken fourteen years to get to Cumberland, and the railroad was still only halfway to its goal on the Ohio River, with a price tag of \$6 million required to continue across the rugged Alleghenies.

Reaching Cumberland meant that the B&O had hit its long-awaited jackpot of coal, which would become the line's lifeblood. By the time the B&O chugged into Cumberland, anxious western merchants stood at the ready, and in 1844, the first large-scale shipments of coal flowed from Western Maryland to Mount Clare. The increase meant more profits for the railroad company, but also more expenditures. Hauling tons of coal required bigger and stronger iron hopper cars, as well as reinforcement of the track's sidings.

But there, at Cumberland, the western progression halted—for six years. The problem: where exactly was the line headed west of Cumberland? B&O directors argued and debated and could not agree on where they wanted to locate the railroad on the Ohio River. Wheeling (then in Virginia), topped the list of contenders, with two other strong candidates: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Parkersburg, Virginia, the latter on the Ohio River, ninety-four miles downstream from Wheeling. Each site had its own commercial advantages and partisans on the B&O board, but each also carried a tangled array of financial and political problems.

Having grown up near Pittsburgh and explored the area for years, Robert Garrett knew its advantages and advocated for the B&O to enter that city, although he was not in a position to directly influence the railroad's direction. RG&S for years

had successfully developed business in Pittsburgh; in fact, for decades this critical commercial region of southwestern Pennsylvania had provided the bread and butter for RG&S. The Garrett family firm had a vested interest in getting the railroad into the fast-growing river city. With its ideal location at the confluence of the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers, which then formed the vital trade thoroughfare of the Ohio River, Pittsburgh quickly grew to become the main entrepôt of the upper Ohio River region. The British and French had fought over its strategic location for decades, and for good reason. It served as a vital link between the East Coast and the Midwest—"a Goliath ideally situated for the Great Lakes trade"—and, by the 1840s, ranked as the largest city west of the Alleghenies, with factories churning out iron, tin, and glass.⁴

As the B&O considered an expansion to Pittsburgh, it had been negotiating with a locally promoted company, the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad to make the connection. The P&C was building tracks fifty-eight miles southeast to Connellsville, Pennsylvania, but the company had charter rights to continue to a point where it could connect to the B&O. The negotiations started in 1846 and dragged on inconclusively, complicated by infighting within the B&O's board. An urgent communiqué early in 1847 from one of Robert's business associates in Richmond, Virginia, reaffirmed Robert's fears that the B&O might abandon the possibility of heading to Pittsburgh and instead take a southern route to Wheeling.⁵ Baltimore newspapers concurred; the *Baltimore American* insisted, "Nobody was seriously considering going to Wheeling."⁶

The elder Garrett and several of his Baltimore merchant friends, impatient and exasperated with the B&O's inability to see Pittsburgh's advantages, stepped up their campaign. In 1847, Robert joined a committee of leading Baltimore businessmen—chaired by Chauncy Brooks, president of Baltimore's Western Bank, where Robert served as a director—to give a pep talk to a P&C stockholders' group in Pittsburgh and offer its help. In its report, the Baltimore group—calling itself the Committee of Seven—argued that "the route from Baltimore through Pennsylvania to Pittsburgh and on to the Ohio [River] provided a much more logical route," one that "Nature herself has marked for the connection of the two great geographical regions." On the other hand, the group claimed that "the route to Wheeling is marked by no indication of Nature—it does not go along vallies, following the course of rivers which have cut down ridges of mountains and made a path through ledges of rocks." The group appealed to the taxpayers' hard-earned investment in the B&O, insisting that "every citizen of Baltimore who pays taxes is indirectly, yet substantially, a stockholder in the B&O" and, therefore, would support the more reasonable route to Pittsburgh.⁷

The committee's advocacy to take the more "logical route" came to naught in persuading B&O president Louis McLane, a Wheeling supporter, to take positive

action. That August, the Pittsburgh option became academic when the B&O lost its charter rights in Pennsylvania by default, after the newly organized Pennsylvania Railroad began work to complete an all-rail route between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. But it already was a hopeless cause. McLane wasn't interested. He argued that a B&O line into Pittsburgh would lose its value once the Pennsylvania Railroad reached that city.⁸ In June, McLane managed to get a financial aid agreement from Wheeling and, for all practical purposes, had his way. For better or worse, Wheeling won out as the terminal of choice on the Ohio River. As it turned out, it was the least favorable of the three terminal contenders, but a decision had finally been made and work could proceed.⁹ In 1848, John Garrett, already displaying a personal, proprietary interest in the B&O—and expressing the Garretts' collective disappointment in the company's decisions—wrote in frustration to his brother, "Our R.R. is a hopeless concern."¹⁰ By the following year, B&O stock dropped to twenty-eight cents on the dollar.¹¹

That year, the energetic Baltimore businessman and political operative Thomas Swann took over the B&O presidency. He jump-started construction and dedicated himself to finishing the job. At last, after six years of languishing in Cumberland, the B&O continued westward to Wheeling. Swann faced the challenge of getting the tracks over the Alleghenies on the most difficult gradients of any railroad in the East. From Cumberland on, the terrain would prove to be unceasingly problematic, including an immediate climb to the summit of the Alleghenies. B&O architect Benjamin Latrobe II forged ahead, planning the new route through the rugged, thickly forested mountain topography. William Prescott Smith, the B&O's master of transportation, wrote in the company's first history (the 1853 *History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road*) of the challenges Latrobe faced in the mountainous wilderness west of Cumberland: "He [Latrobe] cut a narrow horse path through the mountain declivities on which he proposed to locate part of the road through mountain gorges that were almost impenetrable to the foot of man."¹²

In the final days of 1852, the B&O finally struggled into Wheeling after nearly twenty-five frustrating years of off-and-on labor. At last, it had achieved "trunk line" status, railroad terminology describing a main long-distance transportation route. The cost of building and equipping the full route between Baltimore and the Ohio River totaled \$22.8 million, compared with a more hopeful \$4–\$5 million estimate made back in 1828.¹³ On January 12, 1853, the B&O celebrated reaching Wheeling with a grand and fitting gala. Legislators and governors from Virginia and Maryland, as well as the mayor of Wheeling, attended. The B&O's top brass and other Baltimore notables traveled the route, stopping at scenic villages and examining the engineering marvels of the railroad along the way. In Wheeling, the

guests enjoyed a “dinner that consisted of every delicacy the palate could describe,” Smith chronicled in his *History*. B&O president Swann addressed the dignitaries and credited “the citizens of Maryland for making the idea of connecting the Chesapeake to the Ohio a reality.”¹⁴ He recalled the founders’ concern three decades earlier that much of Baltimore’s trade to the west was being “drawn to the Cities of Philadelphia and New York by the public works of the Pennsylvania and the Erie Canal,” and unless another means of transportation could be devised to bring back commerce, “this trade would be lost to the City forever.”¹⁵

The B&O’s once seemingly impossible dream of forging across the mountains and reaching the Ohio River by using the powerful technology of the railroad did not go unnoticed. It captured the nation’s imagination. On June 1, 1858, a group of fifty intrepid artists and poets set out from Baltimore on a five-day journey to Wheeling to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the laying of the B&O cornerstone. *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine* featured the fanciful venture in an article entitled “The 1858 Artists’ Excursion Over the B&O Rail Road.” Starting with a brief history of the development of the B&O, and claiming that in England the idea of a railroad had “vegetated for more than a century,” the piece trumpeted that in the United States, “the response was the adoption of the grandest, most audacious scheme for the purposes of internal commerce which has yet been conceived and executed in thirty years.” Under the careful orchestration of William Prescott Smith, who took charge of “the aesthetic and social department of the expedition,” the travelers retraced the journey of the initial Wheeling celebrants, five years earlier. With some of the 1858 participants riding on the cowcatchers of the train to get a better view of the scenery, they captured their adventures in illustrations, poetry, and lyrical prose. Their writings compared the achievements of the B&O—“the grandest and most renowned work of its age!”—to the grandeur of the classical world.¹⁶ The *Harper’s* article represented “the first known attempt of a railroad using art to publicize itself.”¹⁷

While the B&O had allowed Pittsburgh to slip away, the Garretts did not abandon hope of getting into that important river city. They tried initially to spur the stalled Pittsburgh and Connellsville project. By 1853, the P&C remained somnolent, going nowhere, but in that year it managed to get its charter amended to allow it to extend its projected route to meet the B&O in Cumberland. The Garretts did their best to get the project moving by persuading the city of Baltimore to guarantee \$1 million worth of P&C bonds, promoting its stock in Baltimore, and handling its bonds. The P&C’s financial problems, dishonest management, and, soon, the Panic of 1857 doomed the Garretts’ best efforts for the moment. The company finally completed its full Pittsburgh–Connellsville line in 1861, but got no farther. The B&O would have to again wait another ten years before reaching Pittsburgh.¹⁸

Between 1852 and 1858, the B&O's miles of road on the Main Stem increased from 302 to 379, with net receipts from passenger and freight traffic doubling, from \$615,000 to \$1.3 million.¹⁹ But it was not enough. To complicate the B&O's financial and construction conundrums, the company's East Coast rivals intensified their race against time to reach the Ohio River. Just as the Erie Canal had challenged Baltimore in the 1820s, so did emerging lines north of Maryland do the same in the decades following the B&O's inauguration. Although Baltimore lay up to two hundred miles closer to the interior markets, Northern competitors held the advantage of combining rivers and canals to advance their westward progression. Railroading competition escalated as the large East Coast ports pushed their chosen rail lines to reach the western gateways ahead of their rivals. New York had the Erie Railroad, heading northwest to Lake Erie; the Pennsylvania Railroad, promoted by Philadelphia interests, was now building track between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh.

As all this went on, the Garretts, now shippers, stockholders in the B&O, and active agents for its bond sales, looked with increasing apprehension at the B&O's sad state of affairs: its desultory progress westward, its intermittent financial and political problems, and the general quality of its management. Their mood, and that of most B&O investors, reached a nadir in 1848, when the line stalled at Cumberland, where it sat, sunk in financial problems and management turmoil, for six years. Worse, at least in the Garretts' opinion, the company also missed the opportunity to reach Pittsburgh during that time.

In the race to the West, technically the B&O finished last, although, as a practical matter, it really resulted in a dead heat, with the B&O, the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the Erie Railroad all reaching their goals less than two years apart. (A fourth east–west contender, the New York Central Railroad, emerged in 1853 from already-existing components.) While Wheeling had triumphed as the B&O's Ohio River terminal, the rival proposal to go to Parkersburg, Virginia, never died. When the B&O officially opened for business in Wheeling on January 1, 1853, work on a branch extending ninety-four miles south to connect Parkersburg to Wheeling already was underway. Parkersburg's proponents were now strongly motivated by the prospect of a connection to the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, a company formed in 1851, and planned to complete a line from Marietta, Ohio, nine miles upriver from Parkersburg, across southern Ohio to Cincinnati.²⁰

The “Queen City of the West,” as Cincinnati liked to call itself—it was less elegantly known as “Porkopolis” for its thriving meatpacking industry—served as a busy hub for Ohio River traffic, a terminal for canals and newly built or projected railroads reaching north and west, and a gateway between the Midwest and South. “Cincinnati meant business,” an observer noted. “It already had the push, the enter-

prise, the vision that later were to distinguish many another western city of increasing growth and importance.”²¹ For the B&O, Cincinnati proved to be especially important as the terminal for another nascent railroad project, the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, which would continue the route westward to St. Louis.

In 1851, Swann had persuaded Virginia to charter the Northwestern Virginia Railroad, which would run 103 miles from the Main Stem, at what is now Grafton, West Virginia, to Parkersburg. Although the new line was separately incorporated and financed, it counted as a B&O satellite from the start, with the bulk of its capital coming from the B&O and the city of Baltimore.²² Again, RG&S stepped in, providing financial assistance by selling this railroad’s bonds. Construction began in 1852, the same year the B&O reached Wheeling, but it proceeded at no great haste; the route finally opened in the spring of 1857 as a B&O leased line.²³ The Main Stem now extended 379 miles from Baltimore to Wheeling, with an important secondary line to Parkersburg—a route that, in time, would cease to be “secondary” and would indeed be the main line in all but name.

Although John Garrett described the B&O as a “hopeless concern” in 1848, the company saw a brighter future as it gained more respect in the railroading world. This sense of confidence and optimism inspired the company to indulge itself by building a pretentious but long-overdue Baltimore terminal station, a few blocks from the harbor and more centrally located than Mount Clare. From its beginning, the company had been forced to live out of a rabbit warren of recycled older commercial buildings at Mount Clare, accessible by a circuitous route over city streets and needing horses to haul all trains car by car for a mile into town. For the new building—Camden Station—the company purchased five blocks of land for \$600,000 and obtained an off-street right-of-way. The noted Baltimore architectural firm of Niernsee and Neilson designed a grandiose, three-story Victorian-Italianate structure, fronting on Camden Street, that would house passenger and freight facilities and the company’s headquarters. Work began in 1852 and the building’s first section, capped with a high central tower and cupola, opened in 1857. A pair of flanking wings followed eight years later.²⁴

The interior of the building featured dozens of offices to accommodate the growing bureaucracy of the company: the offices and private rooms of the president, as well as the offices of the master of transportation, the freight agent, the auditor, and the treasurer lined the second floor, along with the boardroom, which was decorated with classical frescoes. Despite the building’s lovely Italianate exterior, the offices, according to an observer, were “in striking contrast with other railway offices. They consisted of dreary, barnlike rooms, somewhat gorgeously frescoed to be sure, but furnished in a manner indicative of nothing but practical uses and commendable

economy.”²⁵ Nonetheless, the attractive new building ushered in a new era for the B&O, symbolically sweeping away the financial troubles of the past and looking hopefully to a bright future of power and prestige.²⁶ It was only fitting, for the B&O now ranked among the nation’s most important railroads.

The Big Four

The railroad world now differed greatly from the days when the B&O fought its lonely pioneering way west from Baltimore three decades earlier. By the 1850s, the B&O joined the ranks of an elite railroad group that became known as the Big Four—the other three being the New York Central Railroad, the Erie Railroad, and the one that would loom largest in John Garrett’s future, the Pennsylvania Railroad.²⁷ Each, in turn, serviced a particular East Coast port and state—the New York Central and the Erie to New York City and New York state, the Pennsylvania to Philadelphia and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the B&O to Baltimore and Maryland. By the 1850s, the B&O’s sheer size was impressive, as well as being more complex in comparison with other, similar-sized railroads. It had grown dramatically from its first horse-drawn wagon in 1829. By its third decade, the B&O boasted 236 locomotives, 3,668 freight cars, and 124 passenger cars that rolled on 512 miles of track; the investment in its equipment totaled \$26 million, and it had nearly 4,500 employees and eighty-five freight and passenger stations.²⁸ Revenues for 1855 showed the importance of B&O freight transport over passenger traffic: more than \$3 million in freight income, compared with \$608,000 from passengers.²⁹ Before the economic downturn of 1857 began to encroach on B&O earnings, its gross revenue was nearly double that of the larger Illinois Central Railroad in 1856.³⁰ The *Annual Report* for that fiscal year listed expenses for the three major departments of the B&O—transportation, machinery, and road—totaling \$1.7 million.³¹

In addition to the dominant Big Four, independent regional lines, usually conceived by local entrepreneurs or communities, started appearing in ever-greater numbers in the East, Midwest, and South—and even in the B&O’s backyard. As early as the late 1830s, two other important lines had appeared in Baltimore. The Northern Central Railway ran northward through York and Harrisburg in Pennsylvania to tap the Susquehanna River Valley. The Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, which connected the cities in its name, formed a key link in the chain of railroads along the Northeast Corridor between New York City, Baltimore, and Washington, DC. Initially, neither of the newcomers posed a threat to the B&O, although both would cause significant problems for the company down the road.

By the time the B&O reached its first terminal on the Ohio River at Wheeling, a rather shaky company called the Central Ohio Railroad began laying tracks 138

miles eastward: from Columbus, Ohio, to the Ohio River at Bellaire. Although Bellaire was in Ohio, it happened to be just a few miles downstream from Wheeling and directly across the river from the B&O, making it a natural western connection. The Garretts quickly saw its potential as a possible future B&O link to Chicago—another emerging financial epicenter, like Pittsburgh. RG&S became crucial to the completion of the line, advancing close to \$1 million to the Central Ohio and selling bonds through the family firm's numerous contacts in the East and abroad.³² With that backing, the Central Ohio completed its line to Bellaire in late 1854, two years after the B&O itself had reached the other side of the river. While there was no physical connection between them—and would not be until the B&O bridged the river in 1871—the two railroads began a fruitful interchange via ferry. The Garretts personally kept a watchful eye over the Central Ohio, poring over daily reports and screening future employees. When business sagged, they directed the company's president to step up its advertising. "Start newspaper articles to revive confidence as early as practicable," they ordered.³³ The tactic worked. In its first year, the Central Ohio delivered 21,628 passengers and 86,000 tons of coal through the ferry link.³⁴

Victories in reaching the Ohio River at two points and making a link to the Midwest did little to diminish the enormous financial burden of the B&O. Although the 1854 *Annual Report* showed that revenues had increased to an impressive \$3.6 million—up \$1.6 million from the previous year—expenses also skyrocketed, nearly doubling from \$1.2 million to \$2 million.³⁵ Hauling massive coal tonnage through the mountains wore down the tracks and the tunnel sidings, which were in constant need of expensive repairs, with fears of the tunnels' imminent collapse. Once again the B&O turned to its patron saint, the city of Baltimore, for more funding. With Baltimore commerce now dependent on the line, the city had little choice but to raise \$5 million in bond bills. The monetary infusion, however difficult to raise, had the desired result, spurring the line into greater revenues and growth. Although not as prosperous as the Pennsylvania and the New York Central Railroads, the B&O managed to hold its own with increasing revenues, particularly in coal freight.

And then came the Panic of 1857. This monumental economic collapse "fell with a full force upon the struggling Baltimore and Ohio," the next year's *Annual Report* stated.³⁶ Competition among the railroads, particularly rate wars among the Big Four, again escalated beyond all reason. One observer excoriated the railroads' recklessness: "Of over-expansion. Of splurge. Of financial wildness."³⁷ Through the 1850s, the federal government doled out millions of acres of land to the railroads, primarily in the West, turning expansion into a free-for-all. The B&O's 1858 *Annual Report* recognized the company's complicity in the national economic meltdown, noting the "injudicious competition between the four great Atlantic lines

[the Pennsylvania, the Erie, the New York Central, and the B&O Railroads].”³⁸ Another commentator cited the cause of the crisis more succinctly: “From ordinary business judgment, a whole nation seemingly [had] gone completely wild. From men reaching . . . and over-reaching . . . and then falling helplessly into the mire.”³⁹ Over \$1 billion had been invested in the railroads, with shockingly little monetary return to small-scale investors. B&O revenues plummeted by \$750,000, with the Northwestern Virginia Railroad’s line to Parkersburg taking the biggest hit, operating in the red. The national economy, Baltimore, and B&O stockholders crumbled under the weight of the financial reversal.

RG&S survived, mostly because of its diversified investments and the relative stability of its domestic commission business. John and Henry Garrett stayed a step ahead of the crisis, astutely keeping track of the firm’s complex financial web of loans, securities, and, as always, the ongoing trade with the West and international outlets. Robert Garrett, the successful entrepreneur, had always shown caution, and when economic disaster rolled down the road, as it had done so often in his career, he was prepared—and likewise instructed his sons to adhere to the same circumspect approach. Writing to Peabody in 1856, as the economic storm clouds gathered, the Garrett men explained their fiscal policy: “We have never pursued the plan of restricting our transactions at seasons of monetary or political excitement, and always will so manage our affairs as [to] be under no extended or anxious arrangements either for ourselves or for our friends.”⁴⁰

No matter how steady the course for RG&S, the Garretts could not control the railroad in which they had devoted much time and money. The B&O’s protracted, acrimonious, and often rudderless twenty-five-year effort to reach the Ohio River and the Midwest, along with the perpetual financial problems exacerbated by the Panic of 1857, proved to the Garretts that the internal discord and inefficiency of that railroad’s management had to be addressed. The Garretts, now heavily invested in the B&O’s future, impatiently watched the company’s fits and starts. They soon made their move to gain greater control, not just as major financial backers, but also from inside the boardroom. The nature of the industry was rapidly changing and redefining itself, and the Garretts had every intention of ensuring their place in a company that now ranked among the Big Four and in an industry that showed every sign of dominating American transportation.

Henry Garrett first entered the management circle as a B&O director in 1852, but he only served for one year. As he soon discovered, the battles between the two warring factions, representing two very divergent interests—private and public—within the B&O boardroom raged as aggressively and acrimoniously as any competition from other rail lines. In its original 1827 funding, the B&O depended on public financial support from the state and the city of Baltimore, as well as private

investors—and each wanted representation on the board. Private investors appointed twelve directors, with the state of Maryland and the Baltimore City Council appointing eighteen. Each side represented very polarized interests, carried voting rights, and held the power to name board members. Each side also adhered to a fundamental, often diametrically opposed, business philosophy about the railroad's basic purpose. Should it be a profit-making enterprise, similar to any other industry, or a vehicle to serve the economic interests of Maryland and the city of Baltimore in whatever ways it could, with profitability preferable but secondary?

This contradictory combination of bedfellows resulted in a board of directors usually at odds with each other. Not surprisingly, board members representing private investors pushed for greater company profits, to get a higher return on investment. Board members acting on behalf of public interests viewed profit making as a lesser goal. They focused on what the railroad could do for the commercial health of the city and state, endorsing policies that benefited that economic development. As for a return on investment, public-interest members felt that this would come in the form of a more robust and prosperous regional economy that the railroad would create.

Since Maryland indisputably served as the B&O's commercial base, the railroad's private and public interests overlapped, but two specific issues increasingly separated them: dividends and freight rates. The dividend policy signaled one of the first major board controversies and would continue for decades. Until the 1850s, the idea of paying dividends had been moot; every resource available had gone into completing the railroad line to the Ohio River. Now, with the railroad fully in business, the private investors were ready to have their patience rewarded, not only for past dividend forbearance, but with a regular share of profits from there on out. On the other hand, the company still needed continuous infusions of cash. Internally, the B&O was hardly in first-class physical shape, and parts of its older sections needed upgrading. Externally, there were questions about how the state of Maryland should spend its resources: extending and then protecting B&O's reach to markets through an investment in connecting lines—which might take time to pay off—or using state resources within Maryland to develop local agriculture and industry?

This debate directly related to a second major issue with the board: freight rate levels. The public group wanted them low, both to make local businesses more competitive in national markets and to stimulate the establishment of new businesses. The private group wanted rates that produced greater profitability, particularly on the growing traffic in coal. As long as the B&O continued to fight its way to Wheeling, everyone mostly pulled together and all such arguments were muted. Now, however, the conflicts intensified.⁴¹

Although technically in the majority, the public group tended to be less cohesive, and several members sometimes supported the investors. The investors were more single minded and consistent in their aims, and they were more adept at getting their way.⁴² But the rancor remained, and it would soon reach a critical point on the issue of dividends. As the rift between public and private interests at the B&O widened, Johns Hopkins—a Baltimore merchant, financier, and influential B&O board member—had his eye on another Garrett who might collaborate with him to better promote private shareholders' interests.

The Garrett Movement

Hopkins, like Robert Garrett, depended on the future prosperity of the B&O and had been one of the first individuals to invest heavily in the company. The two men, along with George Peabody, had come to Baltimore around the same time, at the turn of the nineteenth century, as hopeful young merchants and had become close business associates and friends. Born in 1795 and named Johns from the maternal side of his Quaker family, Hopkins left the family farm near Annapolis, Maryland, to work in his Uncle Gerard's wholesale grocery in Baltimore at the age of 17. "Buy the best and do the best thee can," his uncle advised.⁴³ During the War of 1812, the younger Hopkins not only kept the business going, but also expanded it. He soon formed a partnership with his brothers—appropriately named Hopkins Brothers—and ran a successful fleet of Conestoga wagons up and down the Eastern seacoast, sending manufactured goods from Baltimore to points south and returning with valuable provisions from the frontier. The long and difficult trip took nearly a month to trek over the rough roads to North Carolina. Hopkins soon found an easier and equally profitable source of income: making "Hopkins' Best" whiskey, an enterprise not condoned by Baltimore's strict Quaker community, and one that eventually got him expelled from Quaker Meeting.

In 1847, the B&O directors elected Hopkins to the board, and in 1855, he became chairman of the company's powerful finance committee, a position he held until his death in 1873. By the 1850s, Hopkins owned between 15,000 and 17,000 B&O shares, making him the company's second-largest stockholder, after the state of Maryland. Investing in the yet-untested B&O had not been an easy decision for Hopkins. Quaker doctrine forbid its adherents to even mention the railroad, declaring that "it must be a wicked, sacrilegious, and blasphemous thing, since there was no warrant for it in the Holy Writ," as Helen Hopkins Thom later wrote when describing her great-granduncle's decision to ignore orthodox Quaker teachings and invest heavily in the new technology.⁴⁴ During the financial panic of 1857, Hopkins pledged his personal fortune of several million dollars to keep the company

solvent, thus protecting his sizable investment and averting disaster for Baltimore and the B&O.

In July 1855, Hopkins, recognizing the business prowess and solid reputation of his friend Robert Garrett's younger son, endorsed John Garrett for the B&O's board. There was no doubt or ambiguity about his leanings: John Garrett joined the board as a staunch advocate of the private stockholders' faction. He took the oath of office on September 12. The next month, the board elected a new president, Chauncy Brooks, a longtime Garrett friend. Brooks's aristocratic family had lived for generations on their Cloverdale estate in Baltimore's elegant Reservoir Hill, which the *Baltimore Sun* described as a "center of social life for the city and the scene of many brilliant and historic assemblages."⁴⁵

As a director, John Garrett now had the clout to effect—in fact, to *demand*—change in the company's administration: to weed out inefficient managers, tighten up business practices, scrutinize account books, and squeeze whatever profits he could out of the struggling company. His bold, imperious brashness often infuriated fellow board members, but he would earn a reputation in the coming years for enforcing economic reforms within the company, keeping stockholders happy with repeated dividends while taking a firm stand with B&O workers. From his fifteen years at RG&S, he knew how to turn a profit on transporting goods to the Midwest on Conestoga wagons and to international markets via steamers, and he felt that he could do the same with shipping tons of coal and carloads of passengers on the B&O. Together, 60-year-old Hopkins and 35-year-old John became a force to be reckoned with, steering the company through the next perilous decades and forming a valuable—although sometimes contentious—mentor/protégé relationship.

John Garrett wasted no time in proving Hopkins right in his choice of an aggressive, knowledgeable, no-nonsense director to address pressing financial problems. Garrett carved out a niche on the board's powerful transportation committee, a perfect complement to Hopkins's leadership on the finance committee. At the first meeting of the board after being elected a director, Garrett came armed with a laundry list of facts and figures citing his and others' opinions of the mismanagement of the company. He demanded a complete review of the company's accounting and management systems. And he soon galvanized B&O shareholders, always hungry for bigger profits and dividends from their investments. In a move that would define his soon-to-come presidency of the B&O, he defied all logic—blinded by his need to satisfy stockholders—and, in his first months on the board, pushed for an extra 30 percent dividend, an exorbitant stratagem for a company usually in need of bringing money in, not doling it out.

The idea had first been put forward four years earlier and was rationalized as representing a "repayment to stockholders" of dividends they had not received

during the construction years, when the B&O's cash had been reinvested. Now it created a firestorm of controversy among the board. When the divisive issue came up for a vote in December 1856, the board—including three city and two state directors who crossed the aisle to join the private-interest coalition—approved the dividend.⁴⁶ Garrett had proven his clout, having persuasively swayed the directors' votes in the private stockholders' favor. The "Garrett movement," as it came to be called, had won its first round.

In May 1857, in the midst of the B&O's boardroom warfare, came the good news that the Northwestern Virginia Railroad—or the Parkersburg Branch, as it was later called—finally opened for business. Shortly thereafter, it established a ferry connection nine miles up the Ohio River to Marietta, Ohio, to meet with the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, which had arrived there at almost the same time. By 1859, the M&C built a short branch to a more reasonably located river terminal opposite Parkersburg, at Belpre, Ohio. Earlier in the same year, the broad-gauge Ohio and Mississippi Railroad had completed its line between Cincinnati and St. Louis.

Once the pieces had all fallen together, B&O president Chauncy Brooks grandly advertised the American Central Route—the country's longest trunk line, stretching from Baltimore to St. Louis via Parkersburg and Cincinnati. Brooks's bravado fell a bit short of the truth, since the M&C and the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad operated as independent companies and, in any event, goods and passengers had to be ferried across the Ohio River at Parkersburg, changing trains in Cincinnati. But such details did not matter, for even then, the B&O had become a master of public relations, if nothing else.⁴⁷

Garrett probed and promoted the B&O empire beyond the boardroom. As a director, he took on a frenetic travel schedule, partly related to RG&S—which he still tightly controlled with his brother—and lauded the close ties between his family's firm and the B&O. He and Rachel toured the Mississippi Valley to celebrate the start of the American Central Route.⁴⁸ Garrett enthusiastically fulfilled his new duties by making speeches, cutting ribbons, and generating enthusiasm—and hopefully new investors—for the B&O's newest projects. When Rachel could not accompany him to conventions or galas, needing instead to stay closer to home, Garrett's mother or sister often traveled with him. Lizzie wrote home, excitedly describing hobnobbing with her brother in the dizzying new world of railroad tycoons.⁴⁹

Taking a Firm Stand

A year after his election to the B&O's board, Garrett became embroiled in a labor dispute that gave observers an early indication of his rigid, uncompromising management style and his attitude toward workers' uprisings. Hoping to decrease preva-

lent freight thefts and shortages, Garrett drafted a company policy ordering all freight cars be sealed during transit, with freight agents given receipts for the cargo. Workers, angered by having to take on additional work and added responsibility to ensure safe passage for freight that often fell well outside of their control, staged a strike in May 1857. Their actions gathered sympathy among laborers as far away as Martinsburg, Virginia, and sporadic fighting erupted along the track over several days. B&O management eventually compromised with the striking employees.

But the matter was not settled for Garrett. He took a stand that would characterize his unsympathetic attitude toward rebellious employees in future labor conflicts that would erupt during his presidency of the railroad. He demanded that all employees who had taken part in the strike be fired, an especially severe punishment in the middle of an economic depression. Garrett's unbending attitude won praise from railroad presidents. "I am glad the Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road took the stand they did with the rioters," Samuel Felton, president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, wrote to Henry Garrett. "I think I can see your Brother's directing mind in the very successful issue of a most disagreeable matter. The firm stand taken in that case will save a great deal of trouble for the future."⁵⁰ John Garrett greatly admired Felton; in fact, John encouraged him to run for B&O president, but Felton declined.

Felton's hope that railroads could avert trouble in future labor disputes proved to be overly optimistic. Organized labor and reform movements had not yet gained momentum, as they would later in the century, but by 1857, signs of management/labor tensions already simmered in most industrialized cities. As early as the 1820s, male wage earners formed parties to agitate for improved working conditions, shorter hours, and better pay. In 1825, female operatives in New England's textile mills organized the Female Industrial Association. For two days in 1840, B&O workers at the Mount Clare Shops staged the nation's first railroad strike to protest low wages, long hours, and dangerous work. In 1851, two B&O workers who joined their fellow complainants were shot and killed by militia during a conductors' strike. Laborers who took part in such events usually failed to get positive results. The thousands of immigrants pouring into the United States at midcentury, hungry and desperate for work, provided easy replacements for disgruntled or defiant employees. Industrialists like John Garrett took advantage of this leverage. Garrett soon gained a reputation as a hard-liner, uncompromising and ruthless when necessary to crush strikes—traits that carried over later into his B&O presidency.

John Garrett would have many similar—and much worse—crises to deal with in the years ahead. Unfortunately, the family patriarch would not live to see the lofty heights his son would attain in his career. At 2:00 a.m. on February 4, 1857, Robert Garrett, at age 74, suffered "an attack of paralysis"—more than likely a stroke. A doctor

did everything possible to revive him, “but he lay in his condition until life was extinct,” the *Baltimore Sun* reported.⁵¹ He died at 10:00 that morning. The night before, Robert had “retired in his usual good health (which had been uncommonly good for someone his age) on Monday evening.” Hundreds of mourners attended his funeral in his beloved Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which he had attended and supported since his earliest days in Baltimore, a half century earlier. “In the demise of this venerable citizen,” the *Baltimore Sun* noted, “our community has lost one of its most prominent and esteemed members and his family a most cherished head.”

Robert’s death signified the end of an era—before railroads and telegraphs and countless technological inventions rapidly revolutionized the country—a time when American commerce, communication, and transportation still struggled to get their footing in the early decades of the century. Robert’s death also signaled the end of an era for RG&S. With Robert’s sons now in command, the forty-year-old business had outgrown its “greasy grocery” days, as a friend had once described the company. It was now headed in a new direction that would make it a dominant East Coast financial house later in midcentury. “Whatever a future life may have in store for our doings in this world,” a business associate wrote to John and Henry upon their father’s death, “a consistent & unspotted integrity will be the sum of *his* record.”⁵² Henry Garrett, his mother Elizabeth, and sister Lizzie moved into Robert’s newly completed thirty-room mansion at the corner of Monument and Cathedral Streets in Mount Vernon Place, where they lived with three free black servants: a coachman, a cook, and a waiter.⁵³

John Garrett had lost more than the “cherished head” of the family; he had lost his exemplar and advocate. Early on, Robert Garrett had recognized his younger son’s extraordinary business talents and serious attention to detail and had nurtured, instructed, and encouraged him. Robert’s confidence, in turn, served as a powerful force in shaping his son’s business ambitions. Robert entrusted his son to carry on the family business and instilled in him a love of family and of Baltimore, as well as a great sense of patriotism and duty. As importantly, Robert had taught his son to not shirk from controversy, particularly when it stood in the way of profit making and business advancement. This, perhaps, was the most important trait John needed as he moved ahead in his role as a B&O director.

Within a year of Robert’s death, the future of the railroad company the Garretts had endorsed, promoted, and counted on for Baltimore’s—and their own—prosperity now seemed uncertain. In 1858, the B&O faced a critical moment in its history if it hoped to make a profit and stay in business. Could it—would it—survive into its fourth decade? The Panic of 1857 continued to cast a long shadow well into the second year of this economic crisis, rate wars with competitors slashed revenues, and

many of the B&O's connecting lines to the west faced bankruptcy. Neither Chauncy Brooks, the incumbent president, nor his predecessor, William G. Harrison, were "serious railroad men," and they failed to recognize the dire problems facing the company.⁵⁴ The desperate B&O needed a strong leader "to take hold of the throttle." Once again, Johns Hopkins knew just the right man for the job.

The Personification of Firmness

1858–1860

JOHNS HOPKINS TOOK NO CHANCES in securing Garrett's election to the presidency of the railroad. As the largest B&O stockholder, he had to put forward the best candidate to ensure the company's solvency and protect private shareholders' interests. He quickly began his behind-the-scenes lobbying of undecided board members. Hopkins's nephew, Joseph, recalled how his uncle wine and dined the board.

We knew Uncle Johns wanted Mr. John Garrett to be president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. There was a great deal of opposition to this among directors of the road; but I knew that Uncle Johns had determined to put it through. He told Ned and me he was going to have dinner for the directors of the road and they wanted us to get frogs for them. We knew an important move would be made and we had great curiosity to see how Uncle Johns would get his way with the opposition. . . . Champagne and other wines flowed freely during the dinner.¹

On November 17, 1858, the board gathered for a special meeting to hold a vote. The public and private advocates voiced vociferous arguments, with both sides struggling for control. As expected, Hopkins formally nominated Garrett, a candidacy Garrett would claim he accepted more out of a sense of duty than ambition. Those representing the state's interests nominated the incumbent, Chauncy Brooks. Two of the public-affiliated members who, over the weeks, had leaned toward private control, made the decisive difference. By a narrow margin of sixteen to fourteen, the board elected John W. Garrett to the presidency of the B&O. Johns Hopkins's dinner featuring frog legs and champagne had paid off.

Conducted to the chair by Hopkins, "Mr. President," as Garrett hereafter would be called, addressed the discordant board. "My ancestry has been identified with Baltimore for many generations and I, born in your midst, have all my interests, my affections, and my future here," Garrett assured them. "I have no greater pride—no

greater ambition, than to lend my humble efforts to promote the advancement and prosperity of my native city and my native State.”² He reminded the board of his family’s crucial and timely monetary support of the B&O in the decades before, when the company faced dire financial straits to reach beyond Wheeling, and RG&S had sold \$1 million in bonds to expand the B&O westward: “When this great road was opened to the Ohio River, and the disappointment of the extent of business from that source was felt by all, in common with others I spared neither personal efforts nor private means to aid in completing connections essential to Baltimore to the great centre of the western railroad system.”

He also reiterated the importance of the company’s westward expansion: “Those efforts have resulted in securing a communication with the West by which a stream of prosperity has been continually poured upon us that must be appreciated by all.” Keeping in mind the broad economic interests of Maryland, from fertile farmlands and coal-rich mountains to urban industries, he assured the board that he would promote “all commercial, mechanical, manufacturing, mineral, and agricultural interests traversed by the road.” As his father had believed from the start of his own career a half century earlier, John Garrett, too, “repeatedly confirmed and emphasized that Baltimore possessed remarkable advantages of location as a port of shipment and market for the West.”³ Hoping to calm his opponents, he concluded by asking for “the cordial cooperation of the board in accomplishing the results equally desirable to all.”⁴

By many accounts, 38-year-old Garrett was made for the job. As a B&O director for three years, he already knew the strengths and weaknesses of the company. He also could rely on the business skills he had learned at RG&S. Early in his B&O presidency, Garrett would prove to be resolute and relentless—important traits in the all-or-nothing railroad business—wielding “near absolute power with a skill that bordered on recklessness,” an observer noted.⁵ “Of huge size, he usually dominated the men around him, both physically and mentally,” the *Baltimore Sun* wrote. “He possessed all the great qualities of leadership. He had, when he needed it, real charm. He was the personification of firmness itself.”⁶

Like its founders thirty years earlier, the big, towering Garrett (his maternal grandfather stood nearly seven feet tall) held similarly large, ambitious plans for the railroad he now headed. He came into office determined to put the B&O on the map as a premier carrier and to make Baltimore a world entrepôt. “A property, which for years had stood in dire need of real leadership, finally had attained it.”⁷ From both his hard-line stand as a director forcing the dividend issue and his intractable stance with striking conductors in 1856, he proved himself as a take-charge leader who could keep the railroad running—and fulfill his responsibility to bring the much anticipated dividends to shareholders. He brought unbounded assurance,

loyalty, and optimism to the job, but occasional overconfidence and missteps to keep up with the competition often turned out to be his greatest weaknesses—as time would tell. If his years at RG&S had been Garrett’s training ground, the B&O would be his battlefield.

Accepting a modest annual salary of \$4,000—the same salary as company president Louis McLane twenty-two years earlier—Garrett settled into the second-floor president’s office in the B&O’s headquarters at Camden Station. Finding himself sitting in the president’s chair, the sometimes brash, often overly confident young partner at RG&S and outspoken B&O director suddenly came face to face with the realities of railroading. While Garrett may have had a successful two-decade run at RG&S, expanding the family firm and counting its profits, he soon found that presiding over a vast railroad system, with its many tentacles, and trying to stay afloat in a highly competitive business and erratic economy would be far different and much more difficult. By the time Garrett took office, the Big Four railroads—the B&O, the Pennsylvania, the Erie, and the New York Central—and countless smaller lines already had laid thousands of miles of track, forming the groundwork for the intense competition that would define Garrett’s presidency.

Two weeks after Garrett’s election as president of the B&O, Charles Moran, president of the Erie Railroad, sent a friendly, although hardly encouraging, letter to his colleague and competitor: “I congratulate myself and this company as well as the stockholders of your company on your election as president, but as to yourself, I am too true a friend to do otherwise than condole with you on this event.” Moran, who had just been elected as the Erie’s president the year before and by the next year would be shown the door, knew well the perils Garrett faced: “Be prepared now to have every action falsified, every motive misinterpreted, every move misrepresented. You will encounter the jealousies of every petty mind that would like to fill your place. . . . The only reward for your anxious efforts and ceaseless task must be the approval of your own conscience.”⁸

Garrett fully understood Moran’s cautionary message. “My acceptance of the presidency of the B&O R.R. is a subject of condolence, not congratulations. I have yielded most reluctantly to the earnest solicitations of many largely interested in the road and our community,” he replied a few days later, with an implied insistence that he had been almost pressured into the nomination.⁹ While this uncharacteristic humility may simply have been good public relations after such divisive corporate infighting prior to his election, it may also have been a genuine recognition of the unique demands he faced—and particularly the special skills needed to meet them. He had expressed the same apprehension to Henry three months before his election, when Hopkins had been lobbying the directors. Garrett wrote to his brother that he was not seeking the presidency for self-glorification or personal ambition, but rather

“civic duty.”¹⁰ More than likely, his disillusion with the company’s management—particularly its determination to lay tracks to Wheeling rather than the Garretts’ preference for Pittsburgh—also influenced his decision. In making the transition from investor and board member to railroad president, Garrett would have to adjust to a very different set of challenges from those he and most businessmen normally dealt with. The three-decades-old railroading industry was unlike almost every other enterprise, and the fundamental ways in which it differed generally created more-difficult financial and commercial problems to overcome.

Garrett took over as railroads exploded in growth—more than any industry that had preceded them—to become the country’s largest and most economically powerful corporations. By midcentury, everything about railroads seemed unfathomable: bigger and more complex and more expensive than any other business. The railroading industry soon became “a flamboyant, raucous game of material acquisition that had about as many rules and as much order as the croquet match in *Alice in Wonderland*.”¹¹ Garrett and his fellow railroad men in this expansive period might have thought that they had fallen down the rabbit hole in trying to understand their grand-scale dilemma. Railroads did not in any way resemble traditional small businesses competing with the store down the street. They became colossal corporations, the nation’s first “big businesses,” with highly capitalized physical plants and equipment financed by complex domestic and international investment strategies. There were no national corporate business models or business school theories to guide railroad executives. They knew few limits. They forged into unknown territory, battling each other relentlessly and ferociously. They wrote their own rules along the way, creating business models that would influence the growth of industry and technology.

In the 1850s, railroad mileage tripled, from 9,000 miles of track to 30,000, with a new railroad being incorporated almost every twenty-four hours.¹² Investors, big and small, state and private, rushed to back the new technology at an unprecedented rate. Previously, canals had set the standard in financial commitments: between 1815 and 1860, their total expenditures reached \$188 million.¹³ But by 1859, railroads greatly eclipsed that figure, with total investments in securities reaching \$1.1 billion; \$700 million of that amount raised just in the 1850s. In the 1850s, only forty-one textile mills were capitalized at \$250,000 or more, and the largest commercial banks rarely held assets of over \$1 million; in contrast, at least ten railroads had a capitalization of \$10 million or more.

As Garrett soon learned, presiding over a railroad differed greatly from his days in commerce at RG&S. He now faced the new and overwhelming “corporate challenge of bigness,” which most Americans could hardly comprehend.¹⁴ “Railroads required far more capital, far greater willingness to assume investment risk, and

above all, far greater delegation of authority than characterized the familiar merchant banking houses” in which Garrett had learned to be a businessman.¹⁵ Now, too, the government—concerned about safety on the nation’s rails—began watching the industry more closely and requiring more accountability.

Not only did Garrett have to deal with the corporate challenge of bigness, but also the intractable laws of railroading—and characteristics unique to the B&O.¹⁶ In 1858, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad ranked as one of the largest and most complex companies of its time.¹⁷ While its system map looked simple and straightforward, operationally it represented a dense cobweb of individual movements. Freight was conveyed between any of the numerous on-line stations, and, as the nation’s rail network expanded, it also was shuttled between any one of those on-line stations and points off B&O tracks, via other railroads. This meant making arrangements for interline shipment handling and negotiating myriad agreements among each of the connecting railroad companies to establish point-to-point pricing policies and the percent of revenue each line would receive. In short, the B&O resembled a 520-mile-long “factory,” producing thousands of different individual “products” in the form of freight and passenger movements.

The B&O’s financial heft equaled its corporate complexity. It valued its assets at over \$31 million (\$26 million of which represented investments in roadways and equipment), with gross revenues in 1858 of \$4.6 million. Already, coal dominated the railroad—as the founders had hoped—accounting for 35 percent of those revenues.¹⁸ But those figures also demonstrated one of the most basic economic challenges that every railroad faced: to reach its markets, a railroad needed to invest a huge amount of capital funds relative to what it earned. Railroading was, in fact, one of the most capital-intensive of businesses—something Garrett already knew well enough from the investor’s side, but now had to face as the one who raised and spent the money. The massive, mobile equipment required constant and costly maintenance and had fixed costs, such as interest, rentals, and depreciation.

Added to this expense, and to generate revenues, railroads had to invest in right-of-way property, line grading (engineered to allow grades of no more than 2 percent, and preferably only half of that), track and ballast, bridges, tunnels, station buildings, locomotives, cars, shops and servicing facilities, and a wide variety of support structures, such as ocean piers and grain elevators. As a result, from the beginning, railroads struggled with debt loads that hindered their financial performance and made it difficult to attract the new money needed to expand their markets or improve facilities. The B&O was no exception. As it cut its problematic path through the mountains and over rivers, the company confronted unique and expensive difficulties not faced by most of its competitors. By the time Garrett stepped into

office, the B&O already had suffered financial blows from the costs of reaching the Ohio River and developing connections to the West. Garrett soon learned he would have to fight a constant battle to find funds to widen his competitive reach and protect his existing territory, all the while keeping his promise to pay dividends.

Garrett also would have to find ways to finance new projects and keep up with costly repairs. Most railroads, often unable to cover capital costs through their earnings from freight and passenger traffic, raised the money for construction through government bond sales and short-term loans, complex and innovative machinations that were new to American business and required both private and public funds. The B&O exemplified such a public/private financial hybrid—the first such partnership in the country—at its founding in 1828. The railroads' huge investments required new forms of domestic and international underwriting and opened new opportunities for American financiers, bankers, and speculators. This, in turn, spawned the country's new financial megapolis: New York City.

Once made, a railroad's large capital expenditures for line construction became irretrievably sunk—and permanent. Aside from completely abandoning the tracks, the railroad now had to operate the line, whether the hoped-for market materialized or not, or how profitable it was. Most other businesses, such as a factory or a manufacturer, when faced with an adverse economic or competitive situation, normally have the option of relocating their facilities, changing the nature of their product, selling to some other geographic market, or, at worst, selling off their plants for some different use. A railroad can do none of those. And, as a service industry, a railroad's output cannot be warehoused if unneeded at the moment. If the product that the investment was meant to create—transportation—is not immediately used, it is lost forever. Yet that high fixed capital cost remains, eating away at the railroad's finances. In most cases, investors who have backed a weak railroad will try to keep it in business any way they can.

Then there is the problem of how to tap into an up-and-coming market. Most manufacturers pick a promising market, set salesmen to work there, perhaps establish a warehouse, and start shipping goods to it. Not so for a railroad. The ability of any railroad to reach potential freight customers is heavily determined by whether it owns or controls the tracks that directly serve those customers. And that, in turn, is usually determined by when the railroad got there. Early arrivals in an emerging market can take advantage of the most favorable topography—favorable both for the railroad's location and as industrial sites. And, once they arrive, they have first choice for the customers already established there. The opposite proved to be true for latecomers, and "late" in Eastern railroad history generally meant the 1880s. If a railroad manager hesitated, he risked being beaten in reaching customers, finding

them irretrievably walled off or accessible only through disadvantageous switching arrangements. On the other hand, if he guessed wrong, he would be faced with that sunk investment.

Garrett would confront all of these quandaries, and how he responded would determine the B&O's future commercial success. The combination of large capital needs and the threat of an unproductive and unrecoverable investment helped shape Garrett's early railroad management style, and he tended to approach market opportunities cautiously—much as he had been taught by his father at RG&S. Consequently, there would be cases where he found himself as the weak competitor and a latecomer to promising markets.

A Dyspeptic General on a New Post

Besides preparing himself to handle all the basic peculiarities of railroading, plus its innumerable technical aspects, Garrett needed to develop a wholly different way of thinking about the nature of his responsibilities and his management style. As railroad fever caught on and lines became more expansive, all roads faced the same problems in organizing their infrastructure. The railroads, in essence, created a new type of business—and businessman—forging into unknown territory. Garrett had indeed been successful with RG&S, but that was a family enterprise in which, along with his brother Henry, he had a free hand to run it any way he saw fit. Whatever he did, in the end he was responsible only to himself and his own kin. But the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad clearly was no RG&S. Garrett now headed an economically powerful, physically huge, and politically sensitive corporation, and he was accountable not only to an internationally varied array of stockholders and creditors, but also to a board that included a significant assortment of governmental representatives, with their own goals. In making the transition, Garrett managed his new domain in the only way he knew how, by adapting some of his old RG&S habits, most notably a tendency to try to control small details, and an authoritarian manner that brooked no insubordination from below or second guessing from above. Garrett asserted his dominant and autocratic management style from the start. He quickly gained a reputation as a “severe economist” and a “rigid disciplinarian.”¹⁹

Whatever the long-range challenges, Garrett immediately had to get control of the company's expenses. His years of working at RG&S, with its many commercial outposts and financial complexities, had taught him how to manage affairs from a distance while keeping a keen eye on income and expenditures. Well before the term “micromanager” came into vogue, Garrett aggressively probed into every obscure nook and cranny of the B&O. He slashed and burned at the budget; he “poked and

fussed about the system like a dyspeptic general on a new post.”²⁰ The bylaws of the B&O instructed its president to “exercise a vigilant supervision of all aspects of the company,” and Garrett took that dictum very literally.²¹ To control “all aspects,” he centralized the revenue and disbursement accounting functions in offices next to his own at Camden Station, an organizational structure familiar to him from his years with the family business, when every detail of the Garrett empire was run from the modest counting room at the warehouse. At the B&O, Garrett and his chosen auditor similarly kept a personal eye on the company’s every financial transaction, thus making a dent in eliminating duplication and inefficiency—and ensuring that Garrett could carefully control all public financial reports.

Within weeks of taking office, Garrett wrote to B&O supervisors in every division of the company, asking about the operational and monetary minutia of their departments. He made sure invoices, manifests, equipment rosters, and receipts for purchases—big or small, from lanterns to the repairs for the locomotives—crossed his desk. Showing the same brashness he had often demonstrated as a young partner at RG&S, Garrett didn’t mince words when firing off missives to his employees. Henry Tyson, the B&O’s master of machinery, often found himself the target of Garrett’s vituperation over managerial imperfections. Garrett worried about the all-essential lanterns, insisting to Tyson that “orders for lantern and oil should be executed in Baltimore.” Inattention on the job angered him. “I am surprised to learn,” he reminded Tyson, “that the scale I requested be placed for cattle near Wheeling, promptly, has not yet been attended to. . . . Pray attend to it immediately.” To Garrett, every penny mattered. “In comparison of the expenses April/58 and /59,” he noted on a recently received invoice from Tyson, “I observe pumping water for the former \$583.25 and the latter \$1904.40. Why is this?”²² Impatient with the construction of a loading chute to move cattle from Ohio River barges to trains, he wrote, “The delay has been extraordinary in erecting so simple a structure.”²³ Incomplete, inexact, or tardy answers to his queries raised his ire. “The statements you present,” Garrett asserted with the same impetuous tone he occasionally used at RG&S, “are not only inaccurate and unjust, but palpably disingenuous.”²⁴

The B&O that Garrett inherited in 1858 differed greatly in its organization and management from the simple company started thirty years earlier. Over the industry’s first decades, railroad executives were forced to think in unprecedented ways about how to manage their behemoths. They borrowed liberally from the only other known, widely dispersed organization—the military—using its management practices and modifying them to apply to their companies.²⁵ Consequently, railroads became highly diversified in their management and organizational structure, the first corporate enterprises “with carefully defined lines of responsibility, authority,

and communication between the central office, departmental headquarters, and field units and the first to develop financial and statistical flows to control and evaluate the work of the many managers.”²⁶

B&O workers in all functions, at widely spread-out locations and far removed from the corporate offices in Baltimore, had to make innumerable on-the-spot decisions regarding train operations, the handling of freight, and other functional situations. Samuel F. B. Morse’s telegraph greatly facilitated the railroads’ ability to communicate long distance. On May 24, 1844, using wires strung along the B&O tracks, he tapped out an apocalyptic message: “What hath God wrought?”

Although the telegraph lines greatly enhanced Garrett’s ability to communicate with the expanding B&O domain, managers posted miles away still did not always have the luxury of waiting for a response or a directive from headquarters. This led to the growth of and dependence on strong, professional managers in charge of a specific department or operation.²⁷ Garrett stationed company officers every 100 miles along B&O tracks to handle emergency decision making. The bureaucracy genie was let out of the bottle, and it would have huge impact on the future of corporate America.

Since the B&O served as the “rail road university of the United States” in its early years, it became the first railroad to take the major step of separating its financial and accounting operations from those functions that involved moving passengers and freight.²⁸ To manage its far-flung workforce, in 1847, B&O administrators, particularly then president Louis McLane and engineers Benjamin Latrobe II and Jonathan Knight, wrote one of the first business organizational manuals, *Organization of the Services of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, which emphasized the importance of strong managers in each division.²⁹ Several other railroads, such as the Erie, soon followed suit.³⁰ The B&O manual explained the division of the company into two categories. The first was “The Working of the Road,” in which a general superintendent would oversee the work of three officers in charge of transportation, line maintenance and construction, and equipment maintenance and construction. The second category, “The Collection and Disbursement of Revenue,” controlled the financial departments.³¹ Many departments in the company managed money—conductors, freight agents, station agents, and purchasing agents, among others—and all needed tight financial controls. From the late 1840s to the early 1850s, on any given day the B&O handled more fiscal transactions than any other American business, including large banks.³²

The B&O’s auditor was stationed just steps outside the presidential suite at Camden Station, and Garrett required all records of financial transactions to be funneled into one central auditing office for close monitoring, thus eliminating duplication, waste, and inefficiency. The accounting office worked closely with the

treasurer's office, which supervised money raised from investors as well as profits made from operations, allocating the monies for new construction, repair, and maintenance.³³ Expanding on the guidelines enumerated in the *Organization of the Services of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, Garrett mandated weekly reports from each senior officer; they, in turn, required coordination and communication within their own divisions.³⁴

Although Garrett maintained much of the organizational structure that had evolved under earlier administrations and appointed his own managers and supervisors for various departments, he reluctantly delegated executive duties at the highest level, preferring, instead, to use his brother Henry as a sounding board, along with William Prescott Smith, the B&O's highly competent master of transportation. Smith would become indispensable to Garrett and counted as one of the most respected railroad men in the country. In addition, Garrett appointed a master of the road and a master of machinery. But the B&O had no vice presidents, as many other railroads did. Garrett ran the show.

Garrett made sure his telegraphers stayed close at hand, right across the hall from his office. The kinks in Morse's telegraph had been worked out by 1847, and it soon became Garrett's greatest ally—and perhaps his managers' greatest adversary—allowing him to quickly fire off orders and inquiries. The first transatlantic cable augmented his communication arsenal. On August 16, 1858, President James Buchanan sent the first undersea telegraph message to Queen Victoria. Financed primarily by George Peabody and his partner, Junius Morgan, the transatlantic cable cut overseas communication from weeks to a matter of minutes. The achievement of such a long-imagined dream caused riotous celebrations in New York that almost resulted in the burning of City Hall.³⁵ Garrett now had the world, or at least his B&O domain, at his fingertips; two or three telegraphers accompanied him wherever he went.

An Aladdin of Railroad Management

Hand in hand with cost cutting came efforts to improve the overall efficiency of the equipment and services. In much the same way as he had studied the most profitable and efficient ways to ship RG&S goods over land and sea, Garrett ordered daily reports on the mechanical health of the company's 235 locomotives, kept close watch on rates charged and traffic carried, and made note of discrepancies, demanding explanations from the supervisors in charge.³⁶ Finding that the big engines were capable of pulling more than the usual eight loaded freight cars over the Alleghenies, Garrett ordered train lengths to be increased to nine cars. Efficiency in freight transport topped his priorities; by 1857, freight accounted for five times more revenue

than passenger traffic.³⁷ If passenger traffic declined, Garrett cut back on the number of coaches and trimmed schedules.

Concerned for safety, he looked closely at accident reports, questioning, for example, if speed or an imbalance in the distribution of weight resulted in serious crashes. “In one case excessive speed is indicated but this lacks confirmation,” Garrett wrote to Henry Tyson about a recent accident. “Can these repeated and serious affairs arise from erroneous distribution of weight on the engines? Report fully on this and all further cases.”³⁸ Close calls on trains happened all too frequently—as Garrett knew from firsthand experience. Traveling south out of Baltimore, his train narrowly missed, by twenty feet, a full-speed head-on collision with a northbound train near the Relay station. At the last second, a quick-thinking switchman, Thomas J. English, diverted Garrett’s train to a side track. Badly shaken, Garrett detrained and thanked English for “his presence of mind.”³⁹ Such incidents gave much grist to political cartoonists of the day, who poked fun at railroad executives who were terrified to ride on their own rails.⁴⁰

Despite his harsh economic cutbacks, Garrett made sure the B&O provided the best, most comfortable service to passengers—a far cry from the “shakeguts” and “turtleback” stagecoaches of previous generations. On the new and improved B&O, travelers no longer would have to sit in dirty coach cars, hold umbrellas over their heads when traveling through wet tunnels in leaky coach cars, or tolerate rowdy fellow travelers. Garrett made specially designed “ladies cars” available, so women could avoid the crude behavior of some male passengers. Vendors went from car to car selling everything from sweet pies to cure-alls, and in the summer children provided passengers with ice water.⁴¹ Wood- or coal-burning stoves kept passengers sitting nearby cozy in winter, although passengers on the other end of the car shivered. The stoves also tended to fill the coach with black smoke or set the car on fire in a collision. Several years before George Pullman’s more luxurious and famous design, Garrett became an early user of sleeping cars when he partnered with the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad in straight-through, overnight Philadelphia–Washington, DC, service. While Garrett made sure that all B&O travelers were comfortable, he also required everyone to pay for their passage. “No passengers shall hereafter be permitted to ride upon the cow-catchers of the engines,” he ordered William Prescott Smith.⁴²

Garrett insisted that dilapidated, flimsy freight cars be repaired, rehabilitated, and freshened up with weatherproof paint. He ordered freight stations to be kept open until late evening, so customers would not have to pay extra to store their cargo overnight. It was not just cosmetic improvements that caught Garrett’s attention, however. The 1860 *Annual Report* assured readers—and potential investors—as to the sound condition of the B&O tracks and equipment: “Our road has now

attained a condition to challenge comparison to any other line in the country. Our tracks are in fine order; our ballasting and crossties have been steadily improved; our tunnels give continuous evidence of durability; and our iron and other bridges are strong and reliable.”⁴³

Passengers riding west out of Baltimore would have passed one town after another that were busy producing goods to be transported by rail: quarried stone, flour, and textiles. Garrett would express throughout his B&O presidency his hope for the development of interior regions, and many such little hamlets sprouted from their proximity to the rail line. Passengers would also have seen processions of B&O hoppers laden with coal, the company’s bread and butter. In the 1850s, coal transport accounted for 68 percent of the B&O’s freight tonnage.⁴⁴ Hauled by the workhorse of the company, the “Winans’ Camel” locomotive—so named because its odd cab-over-boiler design gave it a pronounced hump profile—the coal convoy traveled at ten to eleven miles per hour, a snail’s pace, but one that helped cut down on accidents on the steep mountain grades. Other valuable goods from the West also filled B&O boxcars bound for Baltimore: cattle, hogs, corn, flour, whiskey, and tobacco, as well as oil from the refineries in Pittsburgh and Marietta, Ohio, and hams from the thriving slaughterhouses in Chicago and Cincinnati.⁴⁵

Even the most mundane customer complaint met with quick action from the B&O’s president. An employee’s rudeness to a customer, if proven to be true, resulted in immediate dismissal. Drunkenness on the job brought the same swift removal, often accompanied by a terse letter from Garrett reprimanding the employee for his moral lapses.⁴⁶ Sounding much like the 12-year-old John Garrett writing in his school composition books about the “total ruin” brought on by improper amusements, Garrett chastised one employee, who then pleaded for reinstatement after being found intoxicated on the job. “I never did think there was any danger in my being a habitual drunkard,” the employee wrote, confessing that while at work he “acted imprudently,” but so did other employees, yet “I was the only victim” singled out for dismissal. He ended his plea to Garrett by “thanking you kindly for the delicate manner in which you intimated to me of my danger.”⁴⁷ It is not known if Garrett restored the employee to his former job.

Aside from bringing the B&O’s accounts and management into order, Garrett also had to ensure that politicians stayed under his control. Although the B&O board’s private-interest faction had voted him into office, Garrett knew that the state of Maryland, with its massive infusions of funding, in reality “owned” the road and, to this end, he had to keep politicians and the state’s governor happy. He kept his agents busy lobbying legislators, handing out railroad passes, and generally keeping anyone who mattered firmly in the B&O fold. Garrett focused all his efforts and charm on politicians. His control over the Maryland state legislature became

legendary—“practically absolute in Baltimore and Maryland,” an observer noted. “His word was law in his native city and state. He made and unmade Governors, Senators, Mayors of Baltimore, Judges of the highest courts, and held in absolute control the sessions of the legislature, when that body convened in Annapolis.”⁴⁸

It was reported that once, after a particularly heated debate with his board, Garrett took his complaint straight to the top, to the governor. “He appeared in the State House at Annapolis at 10 o’clock, during the regular session of the legislature,” a reporter noted. “He went up stairs to the governor’s office, sent for the officers and leaders of both houses and told them he wanted them to pass, at once, a bill giving him as President of the Railway Company, certain powers not granted by the [B&O] charter.” The bill sailed through both houses. By the end of the day, “a certified copy was given to Mr. Garrett and he returned to Baltimore in triumph, in time for his evening meal at home.”⁴⁹

By 1860, Garrett was satisfied with his increasing control and his initial overhaul, making the company leaner and more modernized and competitive. His efforts apparently paid off. The B&O’s 1860 *Annual Report* brimmed with good news—an optimistic report, like all the others under his administration, which Garrett carefully reviewed and edited. The report showed a remarkable net income of over \$2 million—the highest in the company’s history.⁵⁰ While the 1857 economic depression’s ripple effects had decreased company revenues by \$200,000 from the previous year, Garrett reported that his extreme cost-cutting measures had reduced expenses by \$800,000.⁵¹ He cited passenger and freight “rates materially under the tariffs of other roads” as one of the primary sources of the “favorable results.” Contributing to this uptick in the company’s financial health were some of the subsidiary lines; the Northwestern Virginia Railroad, for example, had turned its previous years’ deficits into a profit.

It did not take long for all employees of the B&O to know exactly who was boss. By the end of Garrett’s first two years in office, few departments or operations had escaped his close inspection and recommendations—usually nonnegotiable—for improvement and cost cutting. By 1859, observers noted that carelessness and indolence would no longer be tolerated, and “the firm manner and cold eye” of the B&O’s new president suggested “a new hum of closely guided activity pervading all branches and offices of the company’s service.”⁵²

In the 1860 *Annual Report*, Garrett also wrote of important future projects. He desperately wanted to connect the B&O to Pittsburgh, and he hoped to resurrect the extension of the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad. His father had lobbied for the Pittsburgh route, and RG&S had put much energy and capital into the possible project a decade earlier. Garrett also hoped to transform the port of Baltimore into a major world port; he appended a detailed index of information about this

proposed project in the *Annual Report*. His ambitious agenda also included developing the “salubrious climate and beautiful country among the highlands of [Western] Maryland” for tourist trade.⁵³

For the time being, the state of Maryland was euphoric. The privately held B&O was once again proving itself up to the task as Maryland’s economic lifeline, and Baltimore and the state were growing more prosperous by the year as a result. Stockholders were also jubilant. Finally, after years of legal volleying in the courts, the astonishing one-time retroactive dividend Garrett had proposed in 1855, during his first years as a B&O director, was paid out. Garrett ensured that regular annual dividends would follow. Many doubters now felt convinced by the hopeful 1860 *Annual Report*. Accolades flooded in. Baltimore civic leader John Kettlewell wrote to Garrett, exclaiming that the report’s bottom line showed “a triumphant vindication” over the hostility toward Garrett’s 1858 election. “You should be permitted to pursue your career of great usefulness to our city.”⁵⁴ Another Baltimorean, John S. Cunningham, writing from the *USS Vandalia*, headed to the West Indies, gushed, “You are the only Napoleon that Maryland can furnish to control and direct properly this great institution.”⁵⁵ No doubt Garrett agreed with both assessments.

Within two years of Garrett’s ascendancy, the B&O was marked from top to bottom, and from east to west, with the imprimatur and autocratic management of John W. Garrett. Profits were up, expenditures were down, and, as Garrett pronounced in the 1860 *Annual Report*, the company was “free of floating debt.”⁵⁶ Garrett’s reports and public pronouncements went unquestioned, for the most part. A railroad president did not have to share a balance sheet or a detailed report at the annual meetings. “Losses were turned into gains, deficits converted into surpluses; and soon Garrett gained the reputation of being the most remarkable and efficient railroad manager in the world,” a railroad historian later noted. “He seemed to be almost an Aladdin of railroad management for, even when he couldn’t show increases in amount of business done, he reported greater profits by showing lower expenses.”⁵⁷ Stockholders, especially, believed Garrett’s veracity, “so great was their faith in him.” It appeared the B&O had made an extraordinary—and unarguable and unchallenged—turnaround in the first two years of Garrett’s presidency. Like Aladdin, he needed only to rub his metaphorical “magic ring” to perform the financial miracles shown in the B&O’s annual reports.

Railroad Competition and Cooperation— and Political Division

1858–1861

WHILE GARRETT WAS tightly in command of his B&O domain, dealing with the outside world—competitors and, most menacingly, rapidly escalating political and sectional tensions—proved to be much harder and, often, well beyond his control. The Panic of 1857 had made all businesses, at least those that survived, hungrier and more rapacious than ever. And leading the pack were the railroads, the largest corporations at midcentury, with the most to gain if successful and the most to lose with an ineffective, weak leader. They all chomped at the bit to snag the untapped riches sitting out in the interior of the country, waiting to be whisked to market and offering potential profit. “Freight lay about the land like chunks of raw meat, and the four trunk lines fought and snarled over it like so many jungle cats, with scores of similar companies tumbling about their feet.”¹ The gloves came off.

More than any of the other problems in his new B&O presidency—streamlining the company and controlling politicians and his discordant board—rate fixing and rate wars among railroads kept Garrett up at night. Before the days of effective public-pricing regulation, railroads resorted to drastically cutting freight and passenger rates to levels that hopefully might generate a certain amount of traffic and still contribute something to offset their fixed costs. Despite the industry’s attempts to keep order, rate wars regularly erupted, resulting in the destabilization of pricing structures, which reduced everyone’s earnings and discouraged investment in even the more prosperous companies. Garrett faced this problem almost immediately after taking the B&O president’s job, and it would worsen as his term progressed.

The battles raged. Railroad executives constantly undercut each other’s freight and passenger rates until their trains were operating at a great loss. When finally at a breaking point, at which not one penny more could be cut from fares and with their companies teetering on financial ruin, desperate railroad executives and freight agents would meet to try to reach an accord on sensible rates. Agreeing on common rates involved almost incomprehensible mathematical machinations—and much

patience and compromise on the part of railroad executives, who were not particularly known to have such traits. Dozens of possible calculations—a railroad bursar's nightmare—had to be factored in to estimate the cost of moving freight, resulting in a bewilderingly complex array of rates and revenue divisions that only increased over the years.²

In 1859, a typical rate war erupted. Despite having had only one year's experience as president and facing veteran railroad men, Garrett boldly stepped up to defend the B&O's territory. Disgruntled merchants in New York City, which is geographically located farther from the interior than Baltimore and Philadelphia, complained that the higher shipping rates to and from that city cut into their profits. Overnight, the New York Central Railroad slashed its rates to New York City to equal those to Baltimore and Philadelphia. With Baltimore's advantageous location 200 miles inland from New York City and closer to the interior, Garrett firmly demanded equally lower rates for the B&O.

Such feuds continued for months, until, once again facing financial disaster, railroad presidents would meet in smoke-filled rooms to hammer out a peace agreement, or at least consent to sit at the same table to hash out problems. They often met at the St. Nicholas Hotel in New York City or, during the summer months, on the elegant veranda of the United States Hotel in Saratoga Springs, New York, a favorite executive retreat. The meetings generally resulted in rate "agreements," "compromises," or "resolutions" that were usually named after the venue at which the meeting took place, with agreements sealed with a handshake and a pat on the back.³ All would be civil for a while, but the need to fill passenger and freight cars during the harsh economic times after the Panic of 1857 regularly unglued the gentlemen's agreements, and warfare would again break out. This unhappy cycle continued until the Civil War.

Railroad men faced not only the problem of rate cutting, but, equally as vexing, how to reach markets beyond their own lines' geographic limits. By the 1850s, numerous smaller railroads had appeared, many of which either fed the four trunk lines or, more importantly, could serve as potential connections with important markets off the bigger railroads' lines—especially in the vast and fertile wheat-producing areas of the Midwest and the gateway cities of Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis.

On a map, the growing national rail network looked impressively large, with new strands appearing all the time. But in practice, it was a hodgepodge of fiercely independent companies that often had no physical track connections to one another and, in all cases, worked for their own financial benefit. Yet the smaller, independent lines represented market opportunities for the four trunk lines, which at this date still terminated in Buffalo (for the New York Central and the Erie Railroad), Pittsburgh (for the Pennsylvania Railroad), and Wheeling and Parkersburg (for the

B&O). A vital part of the competitive game for each of the Big Four involved negotiating traffic agreements with these independent connections that would favor their business over some other trunk line. And the smaller connecting railroads, where they could, played one trunk line against another to get the best deal for themselves. This multiparty free-for-all resulted in constantly shifting alliances, not unlike a chess game that required a reasonably clear strategic vision, adequate financial resources, and the ability to move decisively.

Cooperation: A New Idea in American Industry

In addition to this volatile mix of brutal competition, out of necessity a new kind of relationship developed among the railroads: cooperation. While the bickering, the undermining of rates, and all-out warfare among the railroads in the 1850s showed a near recklessness that bordered on corporate madness, railroad men also began to lay the foundations for corporate restructuring and relationship building that would evolve into an interconnected national rail system. The period from 1858 to 1861 represented the railroad industry's efforts to form alliances and secure traffic arrangements with independent connections to reach midwestern markets, which often meant financially supporting other lines.

Cooperating with a competitor opened up an unprecedented kind of relationship in American enterprise. Prior to this, a merchant or industrialist would be reluctant to lend a hand to a rival. But, since freight and passengers often traveled over multiple lines to reach their destinations, railroads often had to work together. The railroads' very survival depended not just on *competing* with each other, but, ironically, on *cooperating*. It worked to the railroad executives' advantage to assist and collaborate with each other. "Cooperation became as valued as competition" to ensure that traffic flowed continuously from one region to another on competitors' lines.⁴

As a result, railroads had to act together to decide how to set a single price for a shipment that might move over several railroads during its journey, as well as how to divide up the resulting revenue. A shipment originating on a B&O car from Baltimore might have to transfer to other lines before reaching its destination in the Midwest. To get to St. Louis, for example, a shipment would travel from Baltimore out to Parkersburg on the B&O, ferry across the Ohio River to connect in Marietta, Ohio, to the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad to Cincinnati, and link again to the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad to St. Louis. Although seemingly simple and straightforward, the plan could easily deteriorate. Once westbound freight traffic reached the Ohio River, railroads bickered over feeder lines into the Midwest. During that period, local and federal governments did little to referee; regulation did not start until much later in the century.

Garrett jumped into the fray to cooperate with his competitors, since it was not just the B&O's traditional land rates that needed to be considered. Freight often traveled over both land and water—rivers, lakes, or canals—and these costs also had to be factored in. Railroads fiercely underbid each other to ship freight that could connect, for example, the Great Lakes to New York, or Ohio River steamers to mid-Atlantic ports. Shipping by water was far less expensive than over land—as the canals of the 1820s had proven in their triumph over the National Road. A land-water combination lowered shipping rates considerably. But the winter months posed a disadvantage for the northern railroads. When the Hudson River or Lake Erie froze, the New York Central and the Erie had to switch to all-land routes, thus increasing their costs. These railroads complained, wanting special dispensation for this seasonal problem. Garrett would have none of it, citing his competitors' advantage in the warmer months, when they could use the many water routes near their lines. The B&O did not have such an advantage, with the Allegheny Mountains standing between Baltimore and the river routes farther inland.⁵

Early in his B&O presidency, Garrett devised a strategy to deal with unwelcome meetings: deferring action and protesting competitors' recommendations, no matter how reasonable. When pressured for a commitment he was not yet prepared to make, he would buy time by throwing up roadblocks. William Keyser, Garrett's cousin who, after the Civil War, would become a B&O vice president, described Garrett's tactic. On one occasion, Garrett asked Keyser to attend a meeting with key railroad executives, including the formidable Thomas A. Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad. "I spent the evening before going with President Garrett, receiving instructions how to act," Keyser recalled. "The role assigned to me struck me as peculiar as I was to confine myself to protesting against everything proposed without making any suggestions of committing my company to any line of action." Keyser soon realized Garrett's intentions, "his purpose being to gain time, and avoid any committal on the part of his company."⁶ Or, when all else failed, Garrett—not a particularly religious man—called on help from a higher authority. Facing a difficult decision, he told B&O attorney John H. B. Latrobe, "I firmly believe that Almighty God will take care of this as He does all things, and I am going ahead."⁷

When not fighting rate wars, attempting to cooperate with competitors, or deflecting decisions, Garrett focused on corralling more eastbound traffic for the B&O, but it was not always destined for Baltimore. His predecessor, Chauncy Brooks, had concentrated on bringing business directly to Baltimore. But Garrett took another tack to increase revenues. He would occasionally compete for New York City business by quoting rates to that port that were lower than getting a shipment to Baltimore. He undercut his northern competitors' rates—thus engaging in the same kind of kind of sabotage that most infuriated him when the New York Central, the

Pennsylvania, or the Erie Railroads engaged in such sly maneuvers. The B&O's circuitous route did not serve New York City directly, so it had to work through connecting lines beyond Baltimore. As a result, the traffic for New York City, which was charged at a lower rate, ironically first passed through Baltimore and cost the B&O more to handle it, since the company had to split its revenues with its eastern connections.

This outraged Baltimore merchants, who argued that Baltimore—not New York or other cities—should be the B&O's top priority. Garrett's strategy and the public anger it provoked eventually resulted in recorded testimony before a special committee of the Maryland General Assembly in January 1860. Garrett pointed out that in most cases the B&O did favor Baltimore, but he admitted that there were "great irregularities" in the rates for transporting freight to destinations other than that city.⁸

These situations underscored the often-ambiguous role of the B&O and accounted for much of the infighting among the private and public factions on the board. As a company chartered by the state of Maryland and launched by taxpayer funding and private investors, it was obligated to facilitate Maryland commerce. But as a common carrier, there were no restrictions on garnering as much business as possible for the railroad, irrespective of the location from which it came or went. What was good for the B&O's coffers was not always profitable for Baltimore. Garrett found himself caught between public interests, who wanted as much business as possible for Baltimore, and private investors, who wanted a profit, no matter where the shipments were sent.

Cooperation among railroads could go just so far. A chronic, touchy issue that all railroads faced concerned free passes for VIPs. Most railroads allowed executives of other railways and high-ranking clergy to ride free of charge; newspaper editors were deemed especially important, with their ability to influence public opinion; and a free ride for politicians served as an important lobbying tool. But when times got tough and every passenger seat counted for a railroad company's much-needed revenue, priorities shifted. The Pennsylvania Railroad's president, J. Edgar Thomson, drew a sharper line at who should get a free pass. Railroad executives, who could well afford a train ticket, would hereafter have to pay. But newspaper editors and politicians were far too valuable to his railroad's well-being, so they continued to ride free of charge. Garrett also regularly handed out passes to politicians, especially those in Maryland's General Assembly or on Capitol Hill who were debating an issue of importance to the B&O.⁹ Thomson insisted to Erastus Corning that "bishops are of no importance" and would have to ante up.¹⁰ His words spoke volumes about railroad values at the time. It was not Divine Providence that kept the railroads on track; it was the divine intervention of lawmakers and newspaper editors.

Regardless of how high in the pecking order railroad executives placed newspapers editors, the feeling was not reciprocated. When their publications were not lampooning railroads and their presidents in political cartoons, the editors themselves took pen in hand to mock these executives' feeble efforts to bring law and order to their industry. "Judging by its results," the *American Railroad Journal* wrote in 1858 of a railroad presidents' convention, "nothing is more ineffectual for good than such an assemblage."¹¹ Periodicals also chided railroad presidents for not even bothering to attend the meetings. The same *Railroad Journal* article compared these presidents to Seth Pecksniff, the double-dealing, hypocritical, officious character in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, Charles Dickens's 1844 novel: "Delegates meet, indulge in Pecksniffian greetings, make Pecksniffian reflections, adopt high-sounding resolutions, agree upon certain terms by which all are to be bound, pledge their faith upon the fulfillment of certain arrangements, and then separate, each to pursue such a course as he pleases, regardless of agreement or resolution."

The Pennsylvania Railroad

Garrett most likely viewed all of his competitors as Pecksniffians, eager to undercut his rates and fares, take away his connections, and, most egregious of all, oust him from his B&O throne. Competitive threats came from all sides and, despite the intermittent group efforts at collegiality and rate stability, the industry's disorder continued to bubble on. From the start of his B&O presidency, Garrett's most frequent target of wrath was the Pennsylvania Railroad, particularly its president, J. Edgar Thomson. Of all the B&O's competitive relationships, its rivalry with the Pennsylvania Railroad developed into the most intense and bitter one, and it lasted past the lives of all of the executives originally involved, Garrett included. For the Pennsylvania, on the other hand, the B&O later came to be considered of lesser importance than the emerging Vanderbilt system, which developed into a considerably stronger competitor.

The Garrett-Thomson antagonism signaled far more than a clash of executive egos, or even the immediate rate-cutting battles. Once the Pennsylvania had appeared on the railroad scene in the 1840s, it and the B&O were destined to be natural enemies. Geographically, the two trunk lines lay relatively close to one another and, to a large degree, aimed at common competitive markets from the Ohio River territory into the Midwest. They originally had been created by rival commercial interests in port cities—Philadelphia and Baltimore—that were only ninety miles apart and located in competitive, commercially successful states adjacent to each other. The Pennsylvania Railroad had been born, in fact, partly because of Philadelphia's fear that the B&O would divert Pittsburgh's trade to Baltimore, and

Pittsburgh remained one of several particular flash points for both companies from then on.

The quality and vision of its management gave the Pennsylvania Railroad its greater edge. In the early days, most railroads hired their presidents from the ranks of bankers, financiers, merchants, manufacturers, or politicians. Not so the Pennsylvania, which was headed by a professional railroader, a boundlessly energetic, self-educated civil engineer. Thomson had made his mark in railroad surveying, construction, and organizational work in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Georgia. A modest, unpretentious Quaker, as well as a brilliant businessman and entrepreneur, Thomson, twelve years Garrett's senior, hailed from a successful Pennsylvania engineering and railroading family. His father, a civil engineer, had helped build the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

Thomson not only knew the technicalities of railroading and had experience organizing and managing one, but, more clearly than his peers, he could see the opportunities that lay beyond the company's existing geographic boundaries. He looked at the Pennsylvania Railroad as an intriguing engineering and business challenge and a means of promoting the nation's commerce, not as a way to gather vast riches.¹² Despite his exceptional business and engineering talents, Thomson seemed to be an unlikely candidate to create what eventually became the country's most powerful corporation. Shy, taciturn, aloof, and blunt, he hated public speaking and social mixing. As a manager, he excelled by being deliberate, methodical, and given to careful analysis. But once he knew what he wanted to do, he acted quickly and firmly. A true visionary, Thomson knew exactly where he wanted the Pennsylvania to go—and how to get there. Although he gained universal respect in railroading, he was not always liked and was referred to as “among the least personable of nineteenth-century American businessmen.”¹³ Such displeasing personality traits mattered little to Andrew Carnegie, a Thomas Scott protégé, who so admired Thomson that he named his first steel mill after him. Thomson also had a good eye for supporting talent, and the Pennsylvania Railroad became famous for the ability of its management team.¹⁴

By the time Garrett became president of the B&O, Thomson already was well ahead of him. Garrett knew that with Thomson, he was up against one of the most formidable railroad men of the era, possessing experience that Garrett lacked. Thomson probably viewed Garrett as a railroading amateur. Thomson ruled over a growing empire that dominated the state next to the B&O and markets that Garrett coveted for the B&O. To assert his newfound B&O presidential power, Garrett wasted no time beginning a vitriolic volley of words with Thomson. Accusatory, acrimonious letters and cables flew back and forth, with each railroad president

accusing the other of spiteful underbidding and backhandedness. Letters between the two men in the late 1850s clearly displayed their mutual hostility. Unlike Garrett—whose communications were usually unambiguous, to the point, and carefully self-edited several times over—the taciturn and tactless Thomson tended to fire off short, brusque bursts of anger and insults.¹⁵

Always an assertive writer, Garrett held his own, lobbing back accusations and allegations as fast as they came his way.¹⁶ He had honed this strategy as a junior partner in RG&S, where he rebuked customers who brought complaints against the firm, and Thomson's brash and blunt tactics did not intimidate Garrett. The sparring between the two combatants began while Garrett was still a B&O director. "It is to be regretted that your company ever commenced this pernicious system of underbidding," Thomson snapped at Garrett in August 1857.¹⁷ Garrett found Thomson's accusations to be "replete with error and prejudice."¹⁸ When Garrett pointed a finger at Thomson for cutting rates, the Pennsylvania's president fired back, "Our agents have not reduced rates a farthing and all reports of yours are simply an effort at self-justification."¹⁹ Throwing down the gauntlet in 1857 after being accused of yet more rate cuts, Garrett challenged Thomson to withdraw his accusations.

Once in office as president of the B&O, Garrett's verbal offensive and defensive posturing only intensified. "Your letter and that of your freight agent are entirely unsatisfactory," Garrett huffed in 1859 over a broken agreement. "The Terre Haute case is a clear and most distinct violation of agreement. . . . I am astonished that you attempt any defense of such conduct. After this, I lose all hope of maintaining the contract."²⁰ In the ultimate insult, in February 1859, Thomson questioned Garrett's competence—no doubt stinging Garrett, who had only been in office for three months—asserting, "The position referred to within will never be admitted, and is too ridiculous for a Rail Road man to advocate."²¹

Garrett's antipathy toward Thomson may have been rooted in more than the Pennsylvania Railroad president's blunt and arrogant manner. Garrett may also have been apprehensive. If not, he should have been. Thomson was dangerous. He may have been an introvert, but he was also an aggressive and tactical planner. Almost from the time he became the Pennsylvania's president in 1852, Thomson began strategizing about expansion, particularly into the vast grain-producing areas of the Midwest and the western gateways of Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis—all places the B&O hoped to tap into eventually. Historians often credit Thomson as being the most farsighted of the trunk line presidents in recognizing not only the importance of markets beyond his own territory early on, but also the need to control the often unpredictable connecting railroads that could be used to get there.²²

The two railroads confined their competition largely to matters of rates and influence over western connecting lines, with Thomson moving faster and more firmly on the latter. But all that changed by 1860, when the Pennsylvania escalated the conflict with a territorial invasion into the heart of Baltimore that significantly intensified the nature of the warfare. Prophetically, perhaps, Garrett and his allies somehow mishandled and lost this battle, with an outcome that was to give Garrett various degrees of grief for the rest of his life.

Barely a year after the B&O's founding, another Baltimore-based railroad appeared, a line known after its 1854 reorganization as the Northern Central Railway. The Northern Central had been originally promoted by a different group of Baltimore businessmen, whose interests lay to the north, in central Pennsylvania, rather than to the west, where the B&O was headed. These promoters built track directly north through York, Pennsylvania, to the Susquehanna River opposite Harrisburg, then continued along the river to Sunbury—and, along the way, tapped into the western edge of the Pennsylvania anthracite coalfields. In the pre-railroad days, much of the trade from this region had flowed down the Susquehanna River to Baltimore via the Chesapeake Bay. Although the water route had its difficulties, it proved to be somewhat easier than the overland trek to Philadelphia, and these Baltimore businessmen meant to keep and strengthen that relationship at Philadelphia's expense. As such, the Northern Central Railway initially posed little direct threat to the B&O in its early years, nor did the B&O have any thoughts of acquiring or controlling it.

But that had changed by the mid-1850s when the Pennsylvania Railroad fully completed its main line between Harrisburg and Pittsburgh and began cultivating connections farther west. Since the Northern Central Railway connected to the Pennsylvania in the Harrisburg area, it became a potential Pennsylvania Railroad pipeline between its western main line and Baltimore. This naturally made the B&O nervous. At some point in the mid- or late 1850s, Garrett, along with Johns Hopkins, Chauncy Brooks, and others in the B&O cabal, bought into the Northern Central as a defensive measure. They were joined by the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad, which had established itself as the prime carrier of eastern Pennsylvania anthracite coal and looked with some unease on the Northern Central's penetration into its territory.

Garrett's group had good cause to be nervous. Thomson—egged on by his powerful political and business ally, the US senator from Pennsylvania, Simon Cameron, himself a major Northern Central stockholder—developed designs on that railroad. The farsighted Thomson realized that his railroad could not remain bound strictly to its hometown of Philadelphia, and he saw Baltimore's use to both his company and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In 1860, working through local Baltimore

investor allies, Thomson began acquiring stock as a personal investment, since, at that time, the Pennsylvania Railroad's charter prevented the company from doing so. Garrett upped the ante by buying even more Northern Central stock. At that point, too, with Garrett's connivance, the state of Maryland attempted to head off a hostile takeover by putting the cash-short railroad into receivership, to force repayment of a state loan. The reasoning was that this would at least temporarily prevent any Northern Central stock from being voted.

The strategy might have worked, had Garrett not acquired an enemy in Baltimore banker John S. Gittings, who also happened to be the Northern Central's president—and a neighbor of Garrett's on Mount Vernon Place.²³ Gittings's dislike of Garrett's authority and dominance in the state was well known.²⁴ Gittings had firsthand experience with Garrett. Besides his own business interests, he served twice as a publicly appointed B&O director—first, between 1849 and 1850, as a Baltimore City representative; and then, from 1854 to 1857, as a state-appointed director—where he often tangled with Garrett over the B&O's public/private policies. Gittings joined with the Pennsylvania Railroad's supporters, and, in order to avert the city's foreclosure threat, he personally arranged to loan the Northern Central Railway \$120,000. That stymied the B&O forces. In the meantime, the foreclosure strategy backfired by depressing the price of Northern Central stock and enabling Thomson to cheaply pick up more shares. Then, almost simultaneously, Abraham Lincoln's election in November caused a brief financial panic and Garrett, evidently pinched for funds, sold his Northern Central holdings on the open market. Thomson moved in quickly, snapped up the Garrett stock, and turned it over to the Pennsylvania Railroad as soon as he could legally do so. As a result, with Simon Cameron as a partner, by early 1861 the Pennsylvania could effectively control the Northern Central Railway and dictate its policies. Baltimore, the B&O's base city, became another point on the Pennsylvania Railroad's soon-to-be-sprawling system.

Perhaps Thomson would have prevailed in the end anyway, particularly considering Simon Cameron's political power in Pennsylvania and his own stake in the railroad. But Garrett's failures of vision and financial strategy hastened the process, if not ensured it. The consequences came quickly. The Civil War began soon after the B&O's loss of the Northern Central Railway. Cameron became Lincoln's secretary of war and immediately displayed the lack of business morality that distinguished his career. He did his best to channel government traffic over Northern Central and Pennsylvania Railroad routes, while undermining Garrett wherever possible.

It may not have been coincidental that shortly before the Northern Central coup, a new face had appeared in the Pennsylvania Railroad's top ranks. In March 1860,

J. Edgar Thomson's vice president, William B. Foster Jr., unexpectedly died, suddenly creating a key vacancy. Always having an eye peeled for energetic young talent, Thomson promptly filled the job with the Pennsylvania's bright and ambitious young general superintendent, Thomas A. Scott. The 36-year-old Scott had risen astonishingly fast; only ten years earlier he had started his railroad career as the station agent in Duncansville, Pennsylvania. Scott and Thomson differed greatly—and that seemed to be the point. Tall, handsome, charming, genuinely gregarious, and fifteen years younger than his boss, Scott was a born promoter and manipulator of people, while, at the same time, arrogant and self-absorbed. Fellow industrialists had much to say about him. John D. Rockefeller found him to be the “most unscrupulous man in America,” while the *New York Times* noted that Scott, with his golden mane and ebullient manner, exuded “an exhaustive flow of animal spirits,” while simultaneously calling him “a railroad prince” with Machiavellian tendencies.²⁵ Andrew Carnegie, on the other hand, considered Scott to be a political genius and the most personable man in America.²⁶ Perhaps most importantly for the railroad, Scott counted Simon Cameron among his closet friends and colleagues, which assured Scott—and the Pennsylvania Railroad—of getting what they wanted.

Scott excelled at much more than mere salesmanship and political maneuvering. He was imaginative, an excellent organizer, and knowledgeable about railroading, both operationally and financially; he could easily adapt his talents where needed in the company. As the Thomson-Scott relationship developed, it was less that of a typical superior and subordinate and more a partnership of complementary skills and personalities: Thomson as the quiet, careful analyzer and strategist, and Scott as the charismatic outside man and aggressive expansionist—but a with a reckless streak that needed Thomson's more sober control. The two balanced one another nicely, and, as several historians have noted, when working in harness they proved to be a lethal combination. Garrett was to suffer much pain from the pair, particularly from Scott, but Scott and Thomson together would make the Pennsylvania into the dominant power in the American railroad world.²⁷

The vicious warfare among the railroads in the late 1850s provided Garrett with excellent on-the-job training for what lay ahead. He would need all the stamina he could muster for the even bloodier combat that would follow in the next decade and the pivotal role the B&O would play in it.

The B&O Moves to Center Stage

On October 17, 1859, eleven months after taking office as the B&O's president, Garrett awoke to jolting news far more menacing than that of another rate war. At 7:05 that morning, the telegraph operator at Camden Station received a frantic message,

relayed from the Ellicott City station, from A. J. Phelps, conductor of the B&O night express making its way eastbound from Wheeling. The message, sent to William Prescott Smith, the B&O's master of transportation, described a chaotic scene that had taken place during the night at Harpers Ferry. "Armed Abolitionists," Phelps wrote, had seized the train and the arms in the US Arsenal. "They are headed by a man who calls himself Anderson and number about 150 strong." Phelps added that the "colored porter is wounded severely, being shot through the body."²⁸

Smith, unaware of the urgency of the situation, sent a delayed response two hours later: "Your despatch [*sic*] is evidently exaggerated and written under excitement. Why should our trains be stopped by Abolitionists and how do you know they are such and that they number a hundred or more?" The conductor immediately fired back a reply, stressing the seriousness of the raid: "My despatch was not exaggerated, neither was it written under excitement, as you suppose. I have not made it half as bad as it is. The Captain told me his object was to liberate all the slaves and he expected a reinforcement of 1500 men to assist him." Smith then notified Garrett, who didn't hesitate to call upon the full force of the federal government to stop the insurrection before it spread. Garrett telegraphed Secretary of War John B. Floyd. Within minutes, the newspapers had picked up the story. "Information had been received this morning of a formidable negro insurrection at Harpers Ferry," the press misreported. "They are led by about 250 whites with a gang of negroes fighting for their freedom."

Despite the misinformation in the early reports, the true nature of the incident soon became clear. The man identified as "Anderson" was none other than the well-known and violent abolitionist John Brown, and the insurgents numbered not in the hundreds, but only sixteen white men, three free blacks, one freed slave, and one fugitive slave.²⁹ Ironically, the first man killed—the "porter" Phelps had referred to—was a freed slave who worked as a baggage handler for the B&O. Phelps's telegram incorrectly described the aim of the raid. Brown had hoped to seize the weapons in the arsenal, arm as many slaves as possible, and instigate a massive insurrection that would bring down slavery throughout the South. As one of the most populous and prosperous states, Virginia's wealth depended on the labor of a half million slaves—the highest number of any state in the Union in 1859—and 50,000 free blacks.³⁰ There had been other slave revolts, each resulting in terror among whites and harsher conditions for slaves and free blacks. But Brown had bigger plans: to ignite rebellion on a massive scale, with the well-equipped US Arsenal at Harpers Ferry providing the weapons he needed. The thought of thousands of armed slaves seeking revenge on their enslavers sparked sheer terror among the white population.

President James Buchanan quickly brought an end to Brown's plan for all-out insurrection. He sent the US Army's Colonel Robert E. Lee, a celebrated Mexican

War hero, to lead a detachment of marines to vanquish the insurgents and calm a shaken nation. Lee rounded up Brown and his ragtag band. In a little-known event that would foreshadow the B&O's critical role in the coming war, militia from Frederick, Maryland, responded to the insurrection and were transported by the B&O—the first use of a railroad to carry troops to an armed conflict.³¹ With Brown and his insurgents in custody, William Prescott Smith sent telegrams as far west as Cincinnati, hoping to reassure freight customers and passengers that peace had been restored and all was well on the B&O.³² Weeks later, the victorious Lee and Garrett rode triumphantly together through cheering throngs on the streets of Baltimore.

Not surprisingly, Brown's approaching execution drew widespread attention and promised to be a spectacle, drawing supporters and antagonists from both sides. Excursion companies from the North applied to Garrett to allow the B&O to take curious onlookers to the site. Garrett refused all such requests, writing to Virginia's governor Henry Wise that it was not "proper or prudent to attract crowds of unknown people in that direction." On the day of the execution, Garrett wrote to Smith that all B&O passengers traveling near the area had to have special permission from "a reliable B&O officer—only given on satisfactory knowledge of the character of the party."³³

On December 2, Brown swung from the gallows in Charles Town (now Charles Town, West Virginia). It took an ominous thirty-five minutes for him to die, but the memory of his insurrection lived on. His threats could not be silenced. "There will be no more peace in this land until slavery is done for," Brown, the irrepressible martyr, had railed.³⁴ He was right. His midnight raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry had produced its desired effect: a wake-up call that could not be ignored. There had been no major military combat in the United States since the War of 1812; now the country had to prepare for the possibility of war.³⁵ "Fate gave old John Brown the lighted match by which the mine was kindled and set afire," a commentator noted. "Some other actor might have been chosen for the beginning of the mighty tragedy. It had to be some one. John Brown chanced to be that one."³⁶ And the B&O chanced to be center stage for the "curtain raiser" of the bloodiest of American events.³⁷ The nation waited and worried about its future.

As a border and slave state, Maryland—particularly Baltimore—found itself caught in the middle, and often in the headlines. Maryland represented "America in miniature," with its distinct slave-holding agricultural regions and diverse urban populations. Situated forty miles south of the Mason-Dixon line, Baltimore considered itself primarily a Southern city—the largest in the South—with deeply engrained Southern customs. In 1860, Baltimore had a population of 212,000; its nearest

Southern neighbor, Richmond, 38,000. Economic dependence on the North, particularly Philadelphia and New York, added to the city's hybrid nature—and hotly divided loyalties. Although waning, slavery in Baltimore held a palpable presence. “The American slave trade is carried on in the most open manner in this city,” a visitor reported.³⁸ While his parents did not own slaves, John Garrett did, and he did not oppose slavery. He owned one male slave and employed a free black male and three white servants, two of whom were Irish females, a typical antebellum household labor combination for well-to-do Baltimoreans.³⁹ Twelve percent of the state's blacks lived in Baltimore; half were free blacks who worked side by side with immigrants in Baltimore's factories and on the wharves.⁴⁰

Baltimore's “flourishing condition,” expressed so optimistically by 12-year-old John Garrett in 1832, no longer described the port city twenty-five years later. Baltimore now simmered as a tinderbox of anger and political activism. The Know-Nothings, with their nativist, anti-immigrant agenda, controlled City Hall. Slavery and states' rights issues dominated newspaper headlines. The city's traditional tolerance for differing religions and ideas disintegrated into deep political divisions and hostile debates, much of it centered on sectional differences, slavery, and the future of the nation. And that future depended on the election of the next American president in 1860.

For Garrett, the railroad he presided over was caught, physically and figuratively, right on the political fault line, as it would hold the unfortunate position of the only major trunk line that ran through both the North and the South. “Every substantial hope of a successful issue out of the afflictions of the country,” prominent Baltimorean John Pendleton Kennedy prophesized of the impending crisis, “produced equally by the wickedness of Northern fanaticism, and the intemperate zeal of secession, depends upon the calm and earnest wisdom of the Border states.”⁴¹ As president of the vital and strategically located B&O, much of that “calm and earnest wisdom” of the border state of Maryland rested in John Garrett's hands.

Garrett faced even more poignant, personal dissension within his own family. The well-known Southern sympathies and treasonous activities of his brother Henry, Garrett's closest friend and confidante since they were boys, would bring the family public embarrassment. Robert II, Garrett's equally rebellious oldest son, would test his father's patience and continue to cast suspicions on the family's loyalties, and Rachel's family, who sided with the South, would make the ultimate sacrifice to save the Confederacy. “When this war is over,” Anthony Trollope wrote after his visit to Baltimore in the spring of 1861, “every man in Baltimore will have a quarrel to the death on his hands with some friends whom he used to love.”⁴² For John Garrett, watching the dissolution within his own family, in the Baltimore he loved, and in

the country he would fight to preserve, Trollope's words rang tragically true. The railroad Garrett now headed—considered an audacious experiment thirty years earlier—had, by 1860, become an industrial powerhouse and would be central to the upcoming conflagration.⁴³ “The theater for the tremendous drama of the American Civil War finally had been arranged,” a commentator noted, “and the Baltimore and Ohio ran squarely across its stage.”⁴⁴

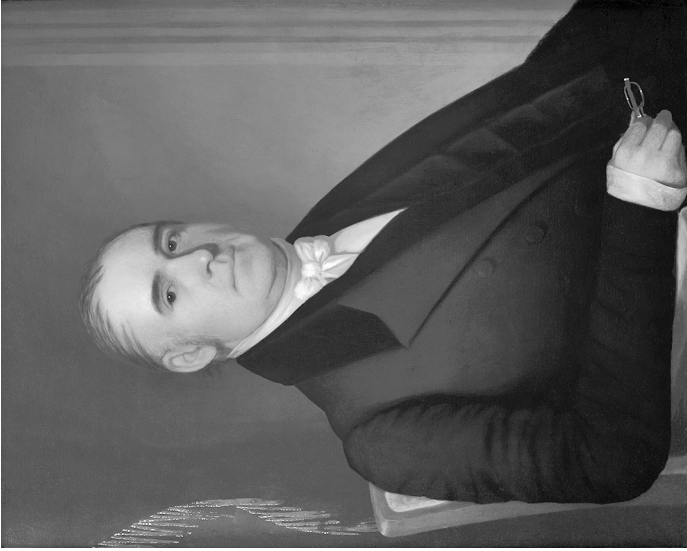


Figure 1. Arriving in Baltimore in 1801 as a poor Irish immigrant, John Garrett's father, Robert, rose to become a leader in the city's commerce and an early proponent and financial backer of the B&O and other railroads in the antebellum years. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 2. Elizabeth Stouffer Garrett, John Garrett's "revered mother," taught her son the values of discipline, loyalty, and patriotism. When not running her boisterous household, Elizabeth was active in Baltimore charities. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 3. Rachel Harrison, a daughter of a successful Baltimore merchant family and one of Baltimore's "gracious ladies," married John Garrett in 1846, putting an end to his "lady crazy days." She provided emotional ballast for her beleaguered husband during the Civil War and the difficult years that followed. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.

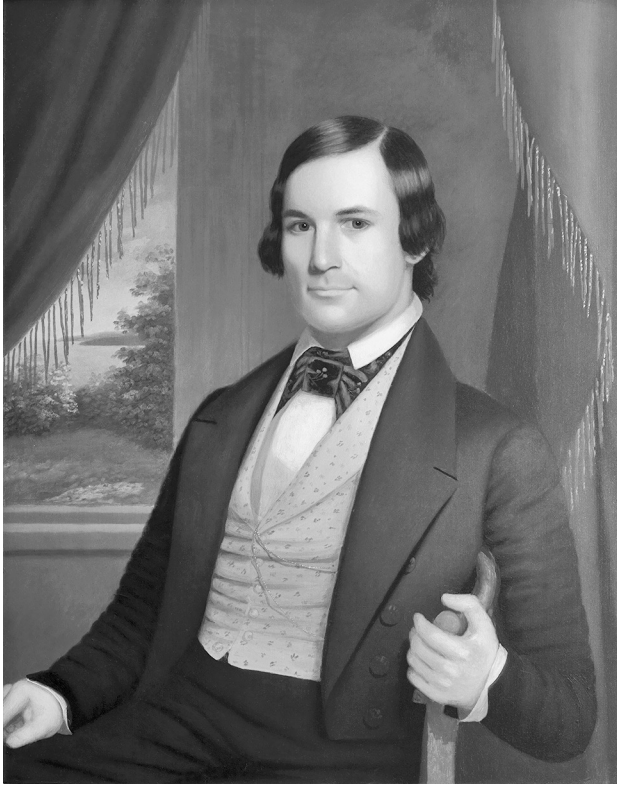


Figure 4. At age 25, John Garrett was described as handsome, impressive, and vigorous. Having worked successfully in the family firm for seven years, he had outgrown his youthful shyness and displayed confidence and a touch of cockiness. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 5. Elizabeth Barbara Garrett, John and Henry Garrett's beloved little sister Lizzie, endured affectionate teasing by her brothers in the close and companionable Garrett household. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 6. Henry Garrett, the family's bachelor and bon vivant, became a respected Baltimore businessman as the head of Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated, a financial advisor to President James Buchanan, a trusted confidante of his brother John—and a vocal secessionist and Southern sympathizer. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 7. John Garrett hoped his heir apparent, Robert II, would create a B&O dynasty, but his oldest son's temperament and personality did not fit with the fierce competition in railroading. "He had too much given to him and really earned few of the several advances presented to him." Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 8. John Garrett's younger son, T. Harrison Garrett, a collector of rare books and coins, headed the firm of Robert Garrett and Sons until his untimely death. He and his wife Alice had three sons, John Work II, Robert III, and Horatio. Harrison's opulent Gilded Age home, the current Evergreen Museum & Library, is now owned by Johns Hopkins University and is open to the public. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 9. As a young woman, John Garrett's daughter, Mary Elizabeth, became "Papa's secretary," accompanying him on railroad business. "If the boys were only like Mary, what a satisfaction that would be for me," Garrett once commented. Mary became one of the country's most renowned philanthropists and reformers. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.

Part Two

“MR. LINCOLN’S ROAD”

1861-1865

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In the Thick of the Struggle

1861

PERHAPS NO OTHER railroad president faced such agonizing personal and professional decisions in the early months of 1861 as John W. Garrett. He was a Southern Democrat—as his father had been—but while Robert Garrett had not owned slaves, John Garrett did. John railed against the antislavery movement stirring in the North and spilling southward. In 1851 he attended a lecture by the prominent abolitionist and minister, Henry Ward Beecher, and reported to his brother that Beecher “proved in the end an impudent abolitionist, insulting even to his best friends,” adding that “he had better stay among the abolitionists,” a not-so-veiled hint that such reformers should stay well above the Mason-Dixon line.¹ But while John Garrett may have disdained Northern social reformers such as Beecher, he mostly kept his political views tempered and private.

His brother, on the other hand, became increasingly outspoken in his Southern sympathies, joining raucous street demonstrations supporting the constitutional right to secession. After the disastrous and acrimonious Charleston Democratic Convention in April 1860 failed to settle on a presidential candidate, Henry Garrett wrote to Erastus Corning, president of the New York Central Railroad and one of the convention delegates, expressing hope that at the upcoming Baltimore convention, “a good and true man must be chosen who will, with might and main, do all that can be done to prevent the Democratic Party from being abolitionised.”² Henry Garrett worked against Democrat Stephen Douglas’s candidacy on the grounds that Douglas had opposed proslavery forces in Kansas and also was ambiguous on the issues of slavery and states’ rights in the expanding western territories. John Garrett took a more moderate political position. Two months later, when Democrats met in Baltimore to nominate a candidate, he served on the reception committee for Douglas’s visit to the Baltimore convention.

But much had changed for John Garrett in the decade since hearing Beecher’s lecture, and he slowly realized that he could no longer let his political leanings blur

his professional judgment. He now headed a major railroad and faced the uncertain future of an incoming Republican administration and a fracturing nation. Lincoln's victory in the fall of 1860 unleashed Henry Garrett's fury, which would increase over the years, while John Garrett remained discreet and silent, knowing that now the economic health and future of the B&O was of more urgent and overwhelming concern than his personal views. He was not a firebrand secessionist Democrat, as were many Baltimoreans, including some members of the B&O's Board of Directors and investors, and, in earlier years, had spoken against Democratic policies, particularly what he considered the Polk administration's unjust Mexican War in 1848. John Garrett threw his support to the "Independent [Zachary] Taylor" movement. Although serving only sixteen months in office—March 1849–July 1850—Taylor had tried to preserve the rapidly fraying Union, a stance Garrett supported a decade before the Civil War erupted.³

Geographically, "Garrett's Road" faced the untenable and unenviable position of being a Southern-leaning railroad headquartered in a slave-holding border state that for half a century had developed profitable trade with the North and the West. Worse, much of the B&O's track ran through Virginia: 234 miles on the main line and another 104 miles from Grafton to Parkersburg on the affiliated Northern Virginia Railroad, for a total of 338 miles of track in Virginia, a state that threatened to break with the Union. The branch from Baltimore to Washington, DC, was in a strategic class by itself. While the Union had alternative east–west routes on other lines, in case of disruption or destruction on the B&O's main line, the Washington Branch remained absolutely vital as the capital's single lifeline to the North and the Union military's gateway to northern Virginia. Politically and militarily, whatever decision Garrett ultimately made to support or oppose the Union would prove to be of paramount importance in keeping the vital link between Baltimore and the nation's capital open and operational throughout the war.

In his 1855 book, *Rambles in the Path of the Steam-Horse*, Ele Bowen described the B&O's conundrum:

The B&O Railroad is, to all intents and purposes, a Southern improvement, identified with Southern interests and built by Southern capital. This fact gives it enduring advantage over the rival lines of Pennsylvania and New York and their connections on non-slaveholding soil. It is, in fact the only route by which Southerners can reach the Atlantic cities with their servants [slaves] unmolested by the wily "underground" interference of crazy abolitionists now swarming along all the great lines of travel in the states of Illinois, Ohio, and New York.⁴

Bowen hardly could have known in 1855 that within four years, the B&O would also be molested by the "interference of crazy abolitionists"—John Brown's insurgency.

Garrett, too, fanned the fires, declaring the B&O's Southern allegiance. "This is a *Southern* line," he told a Baltimore gathering in 1860, "and if necessity should require—which heaven forbid—it will prove the great bulwark of the border and a sure agency for home defense" should Maryland secede. He enumerated the B&O's capabilities, with its "4,000 locomotives and cars to transport daily 10,000 troops."⁵ But he had also cautiously and diplomatically played both sides in the debate. Just a year earlier, he had made the B&O available to assist federal troops during John Brown's failed insurrection at Harpers Ferry. Such ambiguity continued to stir controversy over the B&O's—and Garrett's—loyalties. The *Wheeling Intelligencer* defined the B&O as "an amphibious animal that could not live on land and died in the water"; Garrett, too, in the minds of many, was neither fish nor fowl, Northern nor Southern, in his allegiance.⁶ The B&O's prevailing reputation as a Southern railroad would cause never-ending problems for Garrett in the early years of the war.

Although located in a Southern-sympathizing state, the B&O was far from being a "Southern line," as Garrett had declared in 1860. True, B&O cars sent manufactured goods produced in northeastern factories down through the South on connecting lines, but the B&O did not serve as a major conduit for Southern tobacco and cotton. In fact, Garrett shied away from putting resources into Southern trade, instead concentrating on the B&O's main line to the west. In 1861, tobacco plantation owners in southern Maryland asked for Garrett's help in building their proposed Baltimore and Potomac Railroad, which was to connect their region to both Baltimore and a port on the Potomac River. Garrett refused, not out of any political persuasion one way or the other, but because he felt it would not be a profitable venture.⁷

Since its beginning thirty years earlier, the B&O looked westward, counting its revenues from coal hauled from Western Maryland and northwestern Virginia and, farther west, bringing grain and goods from the fertile farmlands and settlements of the Ohio Valley, whose residents declared loyalty to the Union. While Baltimore had been founded in a Southern colony, over the decades its commerce increasingly shifted many of its citizens' political loyalties to the North and West. As the nation began to fracture, with the seceding states cutting off their commercial lifelines to the North, Garrett recognized the economic impact such drastic actions would have on the B&O and Maryland.

He slowly and methodically began to align with the Union. Garrett was a businessman, not a politician, and B&O business, not politics, influenced his decisions. Baltimore's and Maryland's economy depended on trade with the West, and that trade depended on the B&O's ability to carry freight and passengers to all points between the Chesapeake Bay and the Ohio Valley. As one of the four major trunk lines, with the other three located well above the Mason-Dixon line, the B&O fiercely competed to tap into the riches of the West, and Garrett knew the future

profitability of the company rested on staying in the race. He put aside his personal and political sentiments, hardly suspecting that soon the B&O would earn the very non-Southern sobriquet "Mr. Lincoln's Road."

In January 1861, Garrett, along with fifty railroad presidents from the border and Northern states—J. Edgar Thomson and Erastus Corning, among others—gathered in Washington, DC, for a railroad convention. The Crittenden Compromise topped the agenda. A month earlier, in a last-ditch attempt to avert secession and war, Kentucky senator John Crittenden had put forth what Southern Democrats felt was a conciliatory and generous gesture to try to appease both the North and the South. The compromise emphasized several volatile issues: to permanently maintain the Missouri Compromise of 1850, which allowed slavery to continue in the southern half of the country and let new territories decide by popular vote whether to be free or slave; to continue the fugitive slave laws; and to guarantee that no future constitutional amendment could ever negate the Crittenden Compromise—or slavery.

Many of the railroad presidents at the meeting, hoping to sweep slavery and sectional differences under the rug and get back to the business of running their companies, exalted the Crittenden Compromise as "such a settlement of the slavery controversy as would banish the slave question from the Halls of Congress and the arena of Federal policies."⁸ Not surprisingly, with a president-elect who had run on the Republican antislavery ticket, the Crittenden Compromise did not appear to be very compromising to Republicans. It suffered a quick death in Congress, as both the House and the Senate defeated the proposal. Garrett returned to Baltimore, avoided public comment, and was determined to stay neutral. The B&O, too, remained commercially noncommittal. With sectional tensions heating up, Garrett focused on the business of the B&O and staying viable in the competition with other railroads.

But it was not business as usual in the spring of 1861, and no one quite knew how a war might affect railroads. "The effect will be confined to ten states and that effect will be in commerce," the *Railroad Record* speculated, explaining that "commercial traffic will drop and passengers will not go where they are watched and questioned. What changes may hereafter be produced, we know not. War, from whatever cause, is a terrible evil and very unfavorable to the pursuits of commerce."⁹ Garrett had more to worry about than the pursuits of commerce, however. Political events soon began unfolding at rapid-fire speed—seemingly by the hour—irrevocably pulling the railroad president and the B&O into the center of the gathering storm. Garrett's loyalty to either side, North or South, continued to be questioned.

The first challenge came very publicly, forcing Garrett to break his silence. In January, president-elect Lincoln announced his plans to travel to his March 4 inauguration on a twelve-day, 1,900-mile, whistle-stop train tour that would take him from his home in Springfield, Illinois, through dozens of cities and hamlets and

through Virginia into Washington, DC. A significant part of the trip would be on the B&O. As secessionist threats and hostilities mounted along the proposed route, Lincoln—rightfully concerned about intensifying agitation in Maryland and Virginia—changed his mind, stating his preference for a more northerly itinerary. Whether or not Lincoln intended this as a personal affront, Garrett took it as a decision that questioned his loyalty to the nation and a public condemnation of the safety and security of B&O tracks. “Our road is regarded, both in Maryland and Virginia, as a monument of the common enterprise of their people, and as the means of common prosperity,” he asserted. “You may be assured that whatever is done in Maryland or Virginia will be done in steady regard to all the rights of persons and property of all sections of the land.”¹⁰

Such public questioning of the B&O opened the floodgates of rumor mongering, perhaps Garrett’s greatest invisible enemy in the early months of the war. Much of it was exacerbated, Garrett felt, by B&O rivals, particularly the Pennsylvania Railroad’s efforts to profit from the B&O’s geographic vulnerability. The Pennsylvania’s lines were in the center of that state, and thus lay safely within the confines of the North. Politicians and merchants alike jumped into the fray. But western shippers, long trusting in and dependent on the B&O, had every right to be concerned. They feared that the railroad would not be able to keep the lines open and freight safe in Maryland and Virginia, and many shifted their business to Northern lines. By February, B&O freight revenues plunged dramatically. Garrett acted fast. He assured shippers that the B&O would pay compensation for all losses on the road resulting from any political or military causes. That assurance momentarily quelled the firestorm-of-the-moment, but the peaceful interlude did not last long.¹¹

Triggered by Lincoln’s election and holding the firm conviction that the South would lose out to antislavery forces as the country expanded into western territories, the Deep South states seceded in quick succession. South Carolina led the march on December 24, 1860, declaring itself the Republic of South Carolina. The *Charleston Mercury*’s headlines blared, “The Union Is Dissolved!”¹² Within two months, six other states joined South Carolina, making good on their secessionist threats. In all, eleven states would eventually break from the Union. The country now faced the possibility of war.

Through the spring of 1861, as the Southern states seceded one by one, Henry Garrett’s passion for the Confederacy rose as his hopes that a war could be avoided dimmed. “There seems to be remote chance of it now that the abolition party is in office,” he wrote.¹³ Maryland hovered precariously on the fence, with no one quite certain of its future. Henry wrote to a friend in the North expressing disappointment in having to leave the Union but espousing the political importance of Maryland’s secession: “We shall ever regret the necessity of separating from the honest

Democrats of the North who have been at last overpowered by the abolitionists who march under the Black Flag of republicanism."¹⁴

Southern senators and representatives resigned from Congress, one of them the future president of the Confederacy, Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, who had served for four years as secretary of war in Franklin Pierce's administration in the 1850s. On April 17, the Virginia convention passed an Ordinance of Secession by a vote of eighty-eight to fifty-five; the majority of dissenting votes came from delegates representing the commonwealth's western counties.¹⁵ A month later, delegates from the dissenting counties convened the First Wheeling Convention to make an unorthodox move to "unsecede"—to break from Virginia and be readmitted to the Union. By June, at the Second Wheeling Convention, the movement had accelerated and gathered representatives from thirty-two counties. "We have no ordinary task before us," the convention's chair stated of the unprecedented move to assert the region's self-government.¹⁶ The process would take another two years to be completed.

On February 4, representatives from the seceding states met in Montgomery, Alabama, to form their new nation, the Confederate States of America. The country now had two governments and two presidents, each with polarized political views, and John Garrett—as the head of a railroad that ran through both the North and the South—had to contend with both. In the spring of 1861, Garrett had not yet met Lincoln, but he knew Davis as a senator from when Garrett often testified before Congress on railroad matters. Lincoln's secretary of war, Simon Cameron, former US senator from Pennsylvania, warned Garrett that moving rebel troops was tantamount to treason and said that he would act accordingly if this occurred. Governor John Letcher of newly seceded Virginia similarly threatened Garrett: "In the event that you allow Federal troops to be passed over your road, I will take possession of so much of said road as lies within the limits of this State."¹⁷ Garrett now headed the most essential railroad tracks in the country, yet he was increasingly powerless to exert his authority.

In May 1861, the Confederacy moved its capital to Richmond, Virginia. Five railroads converged in Richmond, which boasted the largest ironworks in the Confederacy and ranked far above any other Southern city in industry or modernity, except possibly for New Orleans's international port. The South, with its dependence on agriculture, had traditionally invested primarily in land and slaves and possessed few industrial resources. While the North had 1.3 million industrial (i.e., nonagricultural) workers, the South lagged, with just 110,000. There were that many factories in the North, compared with the South's 1,800. In 1860, Pennsylvania alone produced 580,000 tons of pig iron, the essential ingredient in railroad tracks and other industrial hardware; the South, 37,000 tons. The South's industrial output of

\$155 million paled in comparison with the North's \$1.3 billion; in one year alone, New York had more industrial output than the whole South. In firearms, the North again held the advantage, in a ratio of 32:1. Railroad tracks in the North covered 22,000 miles, twenty times more than in the South, and were, despite some differing gauges, relatively well connected, forming an almost seamless transportation system that stretched from east to west. Northern railroads represented a capital investment of more than \$895 million.¹⁸ The South contained a mere 9,000 miles of regional tracks, of varying incompatible gauges, connecting local towns.¹⁹

Despite the transportation and industrial inequities, neither the North nor the South had a military that was prepared for war. The nation had 16,300 army troops in 1861, with 138 forts and garrisons to protect over three million square miles and keep hostile Indians in check, insurmountable tasks for a thinly stretched military.²⁰ Soldiers, tall or short, lean or stout, wore one-size-fits-all uniforms, causing General Montgomery Meigs to observe that a platoon resembled an "international convention of clowns."²¹ By the spring of 1861, after the Deep South seceded, 270 out of 1,105 officers of the Regular Army, or 25 percent, left to join the Confederacy.²² It soon became apparent that the coming war would be fought by citizen-soldiers, not professionals.²³ General William Tecumseh Sherman—who, in the waning months of 1864 on his infamous March to the Sea, would unleash a fury of unprecedented destruction that ultimately collapsed the South's infrastructure and morale—exploded when he read of South Carolina's secession: "You people of the South don't know what you are doing. This country will be drenched in blood, and God only knows how it will end. It is all folly, madness, a crime against civilization! The North can make a steam engine, locomotive, or railway car; hardly a yard of cloth or pair of shoes can you make. You are rushing into war with one of the most powerful, ingeniously mechanical, and determined people on Earth—right at your doors. You are bound to fail."²⁴

Southerners—not all, but enough to tip the balance—remained undeterred by such admonitions. Although only a slim minority of Southerners owned a thousand or more slaves, the rest of the South depended on slave labor to support its livelihood and its social structure. Southern nationalism surged. "One Southerner could lick a dozen Yankees" became a rallying call popularized in fiction.²⁵ Georgia senator Robert Toombs, one of the most outspoken secessionists in Congress, incited the fury: "We could whip them with cotton stalks."²⁶ Young men rushed to sign up, eager to earn what novelist Stephen Crane later described as their "red badge of courage"—a battle wound—and fearful that the war would be over before they could prove their bravery.²⁷

In the midst of the constitutional chaos of that secessionist winter, Lincoln made his way to Washington, DC, on the "Inauguration Special" train, a seventy-city

journey that started on February 11 in his hometown of Springfield, Illinois, and ended in the capital, where he would take the oath of office. He traveled via the last-minute-revised northern route that had provoked Garrett, with plans for a short stop in Baltimore. But mingling with the crowds in the highly ignitable city proved to be a risky idea. Fears of an assassination plot in Baltimore had been swirling for weeks. Citizens wrote to the president-elect with their concerns for his safety, fearing that he would never pass through the city alive.

As the date of Lincoln's journey neared, anxiety in Baltimore intensified—as did the scope of the plots. Rumors flew of an assassination conspiracy, the Baltimore Plot, allegedly masterminded in the basement barbershop of Baltimore's luxurious Barnum Hotel. Purportedly, assassins were to lie in wait for Lincoln after his scheduled disembarkation from the Philadelphia train to connect with his Washington-bound train—perhaps the most perilous, vulnerable part of his journey. A long-standing Baltimore city ordinance prohibited the dirty and gritty locomotives from running through downtown streets, and Lincoln's train, arriving from Philadelphia, had to be uncoupled at the President Street station on the east side of Baltimore's harbor, with each car painstakingly and slowly hauled by horses a mile away to the B&O's Camden Station. Three thousand men would be waiting, it was said, prepared to stage a riot to deflect attention from Lincoln's bodyguards during the vulnerable trek across town. The rioters had drawn lots to see who would have the "honor of striking the final blow."²⁸

Lincoln's advisers, including the Pennsylvania Railroad's Tom Scott and Allan Pinkerton—a Scotsman gaining renown as America's most famous detective and charged with the president-elect's safety—suggested that Lincoln reconsider his route. Unconcerned, Lincoln expressed disbelief that he would be an assassination target. But he agreed to slightly revise his plan. Foregoing his special inaugural train, Lincoln instead boarded the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad's midnight train out of Philadelphia and passed through Baltimore at 3:00 a.m. After its arrival at the PW&B's Calvert Street station in Baltimore, his car was transferred to the B&O's Camden station and coupled to a train bound for Washington, DC—thereby bypassing his scheduled Baltimore stop. Mary Todd Lincoln and their three sons followed on a later train. Tom Scott disconnected all telegraph wires along the Philadelphia–Washington, DC, route to ensure secrecy.

Once Lincoln had arrived safely in Washington, DC, Pinkerton cabled Scott with a coded message: "Plums delivered nuts safely." Purportedly, Scott jumped for joy. The "midnight ride to Washington," during which Lincoln allegedly slept his way through the train transfer in Baltimore, immediately branded him a coward, providing more grist for anti-Lincoln sentiment, not in short supply in Baltimore. Through all the commotion, Lincoln seemed unperturbed. "He had not evinced

the slightest agitation or fear,” Pinkerton later noted. The president-elect seemed “calm and self-possessed, his only sentiments appeared to be those of profound regret that the Southern sympathizers could be so far led away by the excitement of the hour as to consider his death a necessity for the furtherance of their cause.”²⁹ Many later claimed Pinkerton devised the Baltimore Plot as a publicity stunt to promote his own career.³⁰

Lincoln’s inauguration on March 4 did what everyone had feared. While he called for peace in his inaugural speech, war now seemed inevitable. It also meant the end of any hope of neutrality or normalcy for the B&O. Six weeks later, Garrett found himself once again pulled center stage into the “theater of conflict,” as he had been with John Brown’s 1859 raid at Harpers Ferry and Lincoln’s clandestine journey through Baltimore.³¹

Baltimore: The First Battleground of the Civil War

Secessionists claimed that federal property in the seceding states, such as Fort Sumter in South Carolina’s Charleston harbor, now belonged to the Confederacy. Lincoln disagreed, ordering the Union fort to be resupplied, making good on his inaugural promise to “hold properties belonging to the government.” Many historians would argue that Lincoln’s order to resupply Sumter provoked the Confederates to fire on the fort on April 12. Under international law, this bold aggression by the Confederates was considered an act of war, marking the official start of the Civil War. Lincoln immediately ordered Union blockades of Confederate ports. Despite the seriousness of the event in Charleston Harbor, no one imagined the conflict would lead to much. The *New York Times* assured its readers that the “local commotion in the South could be put to rest effectually in thirty days.” The *Chicago Tribune* seemed equally unconcerned, predicting the fight would be over in two months.³²

But newspapers, and the nation as a whole, greatly underestimated the depth of emotion that had been simmering for decades—or the issues that fueled the war, not least the demographics of the country. In 1860, there were more than twenty-seven million whites in the United States, half under the age of 21. A youthful exuberance pervaded the country, a cockiness, a self-righteous confidence, and an arrogance that pushed Americans to extremes with their regional loyalties. The high-spirited Johnny Rebs met their match with the equally patriotic Billy Yanks, many of whom were immigrants who, as recently settled East Coast wage earners and Midwestern farmers, were anxious to preserve their new homeland.

Garrett and his loyalties were again put to the test—twice in as many days. On April 17, Garrett had agreed to transport Union troops from Ohio through Virginia to defend Washington, DC, dangerously situated between two slave-holding states.

Much of Virginia, particularly in the southern regions of the Commonwealth, burned white hot with anti-Union hostilities. At the last minute, Garrett reneged, claiming that he feared for the safety of the troops and his crew. He also insisted that many B&O cars were already engaged in commercial movements, so there were not enough cars available for the troop transfer. Once again, rumors flew about the B&O and its president. Was he truly worried about the safety of transporting Union troops through volatile areas of the B&O lines, or was he refusing to aid the Union because of personal Southern sympathies? The press fueled the debate, with the *Wheeling Intelligencer* charging that Garrett had refused to carry federal troops, instead favoring only Maryland and Virginia troops.³³ Garrett telegraphed Hugh Jewett, president of the Central Ohio Railroad, advising him to contradict such rumors, which Garrett felt were "the misrepresentation of rival lines," notably the Pennsylvania Railroad. "Our Company is transporting government troops to Washington. Our entire line is free from excitement or difficulty."³⁴

Although newspapers diminished the importance of the Fort Sumter clash, Lincoln did not. The president immediately called up 75,000 Union volunteers to quash the rebellion. On the morning of April 19, Garrett anxiously prepared for the arrival in Baltimore of the train from the North bearing the first loyal militiamen, who had eagerly responded to Lincoln's call to arms. The *Baltimore American* forecasted the impact of the day's tragic events—"Baltimore is to be the battlefield of the Southern Revolution"—setting an ominous tone for the city's role in the quickly escalating war.³⁵ The train carried 800 armed members of the Sixth Massachusetts Volunteer Militia from the Boston area, along with unarmed volunteers from Pennsylvania. As the train slowly chugged its way toward "Mobtown," as Baltimore had been called since the nativist Know-Nothing riots a few years earlier, the men were ordered to load their rifles in preparation for entering the explosive city.

The troops arrived at 7:00 a.m. at the President Street station on the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. Similar to the arduous procedure Lincoln had faced just weeks earlier in transferring trains, the troop train had to be uncoupled at the President Street station and each car hauled by horses across town to be recoupled to a B&O-hauled train to Washington, DC. The first seven cars made the passage along Pratt Street, but the eighth car was turned back, and four companies were forced to march the entire one-and-a-half-mile distance from President Street to Camden Station. The timing was unfortunate. Many Baltimore workers filled the streets, making their way to or from work, when they encountered the Union troops on the slow-moving train caravan across town. Within minutes, an angry, rock-throwing mob of nearly ten thousand surrounded the cars. The commanding officer ordered the soldiers to disembark from the vulnerable cars. Suddenly, chaos erupted in the street. The police department, woefully undermanned

and unprepared for such a violent outbreak—and possibly inclined to turn a blind eye to it—nonetheless tried to bring order, while Police Marshal George P. Kane desperately telegraphed for military assistance, exclaiming, “Streets red with Maryland blood!”³⁶ The first death of the Civil War occurred on Pratt Street in downtown Baltimore.

An anxious Lincoln waited in Washington, DC. “Why don’t they come?” the president asked as he paced, looking out the White House window, eager for the latest dispatch.³⁷ In Baltimore, at the B&O’s Camden station, Garrett frantically tried to help quell the chaos, directing the embattled troops onto the Washington-bound train one by one as they struggled their way through the angry crowd. “By his presence and influence, Garrett helped to suppress the riot.”³⁸ As the troops finally made their way out of Baltimore on the B&O, southbound for Washington, DC, some vengeful soldiers delivered their parting potshots, shooting from the windows and taking down a Maryland farmer along the way. William Prescott Smith later described the riot to Samuel Felton: “I never risked my life so sadly before. The first regiment got off with the greatest difficulty, our streets and tracks were obstructed in every form and also for five mile out of town.”³⁹ Union troops remained unapologetic about the riot. “Remember that it was the Sixth Regiment that killed the first secessionist,” a Massachusetts volunteer boasted.⁴⁰

By the end of this conflict, four soldiers and twelve citizens lay dead, with dozens more wounded. Baltimore earned the unwelcome distinction as the initial battleground of the Civil War. The first blood in a war that would eventually claim an estimated 630,000 lives spilled through the heart of Baltimore, on the border ground symbolizing the fracture between the North and the South.⁴¹ Marylanders, particularly Baltimoreans, were branded as pro-Southern, proslavery rabble-rousers and troublemakers. Southerners hailed the confrontation as the “Battle of Baltimore” and warned that to go through that explosive city meant to “go through Baltimore and die!” Northerners saw it much differently, likening it to the trigger of the American Revolution and calling the April 19 event the “Lexington of 1861.”⁴²

Many Baltimoreans pointed the finger of blame at Garrett, whom they held responsible for bringing the Northern troops through town and intentionally igniting the firestorm. Maryland governor Thomas Hicks ordered the destruction of railroad bridges north of Baltimore, to prevent Union troops from again being transported through the city. Led by John Merryman, a prominent Maryland planter and lieutenant in the Baltimore County Horse Guards, the mob marched with clenched fists and a handwritten threat to Garrett’s office at Camden Station: “One Hundred of us, Firm Respectable, Resolute men—have determined & Sworn to each other, to destroy *‘every’* Bridge and to tear up your Track on both lines of your Road [the Main Line and the Washington Branch] between this City & their head points—If you

carry another Soldier over either line of your Road after Saturday, April 20th."⁴³ The men immediately made good on their intentions by destroying several essential Northern Central Railway bridges as far north as Parkton, Maryland, cutting the rail route connecting Baltimore to Washington, DC. These threats and the ensuing destruction signaled a tragic prophecy for the B&O, as tracks, stations, tunnels, bridges, and telegraph lines would be the first targets of the war. The April 19 fiasco proved Garrett right in his stand against using Baltimore as a thoroughfare for the transport of Union troops. For a time after that, soldiers were rerouted well beyond Baltimore's borders.

For Garrett, the April 19 riot, the threats and insults, and the destruction of B&O property tempered his Southern leanings. As one commentator noted, "His heart gave in to his head."⁴⁴ Garrett called the melee "misguided."⁴⁵ No longer referring to the B&O as a "Southern line," as he had a year earlier, he now asserted: "God never intended this country should be divided and torn to pieces. The best business is to sustain the government, and I am going to do it to the best of my ability, and when it is over Maryland will realize that my action was best for the interests of the state, and especially for the interests of Baltimore City. We are going to back up President Lincoln with all of our resources and are going to begin at once."⁴⁶ Loyal to the core, Garrett knew his beloved Maryland and the B&O would be ruined if the state joined the secessionist march. On May 13, General Benjamin Butler requested Garrett to arrange transport to take federal troops to occupy Baltimore at Federal Hill, overlooking the harbor. It proved to be a decisive move; the Confederacy now knew Garrett leaned toward assisting Union strategies. The South could not count on the B&O in the escalating conflict.⁴⁷

Garrett had tried to suppress dangerous rumors, and he had helped control the April 19 riot. But he could not resolve the thorny problem of Baltimore's unfortunate location as the primary defense of Washington, DC, and the indispensable role the B&O would have to play in the divided nation. "It was a terrible time for all on the border, for it was the war time and my father was in the thick of the struggle," Garrett's daughter Mary recalled of that tumultuous period. "The Baltimore and Ohio played a very conspicuous part and my father through his connection with it a very important part."⁴⁸ Garrett knew he could count on the support of his mentor, friend, and B&O director, Johns Hopkins, who was an avid abolitionist and Unionist. Hopkins supported Lincoln, often writing to the president and signing his letters "your servant and friend." Hopkins also made his summer home, Clifton, outside of Baltimore, available as a place for generals and politicians to meet and strategize.⁴⁹

Garrett *was* in "the thick of the struggle," probably much more so than he had wished, and Lincoln's new secretary of war, Simon Cameron, created much of that

struggle. Cameron had not been Lincoln's first choice for that critical role, but Lincoln filled his cabinet for avowedly political reasons and often resorted to appointing less-than-competent supporters to it. One of those appointees was Cameron, whom Garrett had faced during the showdown over the Northern Central Railway, and who, in 1860, had also blocked Garrett's attempts to build a bridge over the Potomac River at Washington, DC, to have a line reach into Virginia. Having made his fortune in railroads and banking, Cameron remained a major Northern Central stockholder, and he was a close ally of J. Edgar Thomson and Tom Scott in helping to promote the Pennsylvania Railroad's interests. Lincoln, already well aware of Cameron's unsavory reputation, had been highly reluctant to put him in the secretary of war post—or any such post, for that matter. But Cameron, with his important political connections, supported Lincoln's presidential nomination and expected a handsome payback after the election. Now Lincoln and Garrett had to deal with the consequences of Cameron's appointment in their own spheres.⁵⁰

The Divided B&O

Washington, DC, forty miles south of Baltimore, was vulnerable and becoming dangerously defenseless. Except for nearby Alexandria, Virginia, which Union troops occupied on May 24, the enemy enveloped the nation's capital: Confederate Virginia to the south and undecided, slave-holding Maryland to the north. A Confederate occupation of Washington would spell disaster for the Union, providing a prime strategic military location that would be a key to a Southern victory. Capturing the enemy's capital would also be a highly political conquest for the Confederacy. Lincoln knew Washington, DC, had to be protected at all costs, and he activated the full force of his executive powers to do so.

Within a week of the April 19 riot, Lincoln ordered General Butler to secure tracks in the critical region between the Pennsylvania state line and Baltimore to the north, and Annapolis, Maryland, and Washington, DC, to the south. As an expediency aimed at bypassing volatile Baltimore, an emergency alternate routing was quickly devised that channeled all troop movements from the north and west through Philadelphia, where the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad took them as far as Perryville, Maryland, on the Susquehanna River. They then were ferried by water down the Chesapeake Bay to Annapolis, Maryland, where the tracks of the Annapolis and Elk Ridge Railroad stretched directly west to a spot called Annapolis Junction, about halfway between Baltimore and Washington, DC, on the B&O's Washington Branch. From there, the troops could move more or less unhindered to the capital over the B&O's line.

Maryland secessionists attempted to tear up the Annapolis and Elk Ridge's tracks, but Cameron put the railroad directly under military control. Butler had the damage repaired and started the trains moving. The B&O line between Annapolis Junction and Washington, DC, also temporarily went under military control. Many of Butler's men were from the same Sixth Massachusetts militia the Baltimore mob had attacked just days earlier. These militiamen had gone directly into camp and were guarding the B&O's critical junction at Relay, Maryland, six miles from Baltimore. The B&O was now divided and in the hands of two governments. Garrett stood by helplessly watching as these opposing governments dissected and fought to control his railroad. Within months, federal troops would occupy the B&O's Mount Clare Shops. With his own interests in the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Northern Central Railway, Secretary of War Cameron eagerly fed the flames of anti-Garrett suspicion, casting doubt on Garrett's loyalty to the Union. Garrett's situation worsened with Cameron's next moves. The Pennsylvania Railroad's J. Edgar Thomson and Samuel Felton, his counterpart on the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, had coordinated the Philadelphia–Perryville–Annapolis–Washington, DC, routing, and Cameron initially put Thomson in direct charge of the federally controlled Annapolis and Elk Ridge Railroad.

But Thomson collapsed from the stress, and his recently minted vice president, Tom Scott, took his place. Cameron then increased Scott's power. On April 27, he put Scott in charge of all railroad and telegraph lines between Annapolis and Washington, DC, including part of the B&O's Washington Branch, and a month later extended Scott's authority to all railroads and telegraph lines in the Washington area. Scott brought along his promising young protégé, a 25-year-old former Pennsylvania Railroad telegrapher named Andrew Carnegie, as his chief operating assistant. Scott's sudden ascendancy within the federal government diminished Garrett's authority and altered his relationship with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Scott seized his fortuitous wartime opportunity and suspended passenger traffic between Baltimore and Washington, DC. He assured Cameron that the drastic move would isolate Baltimore, subdue secessionist-leaning Marylanders, and, perhaps as importantly, subjugate his rivals—the B&O and its president.⁵¹ Butler acted quickly by commandeering the junction of the B&O's main line and its Washington Branch at Relay, Maryland, giving the federal government control of all B&O traffic in and out of Baltimore. Thanks to this and other forms of intimidation, Butler forcibly resolved Baltimore's instability, the emergency ceased, and railroad movements resumed their normal patterns.

This marked only the beginning of Garrett's problems with Cameron and Scott, however. In early August, Cameron appointed Scott as assistant secretary of war, primarily overseeing transportation and logistics—although in the North, the railroads

remained under private management and operation. The able and experienced Scott proved to be an excellent choice for the job, but, unfortunately for Garrett, the Cameron-Scott axis owed its primary allegiance to the Pennsylvania Railroad and its satellite, the Northern Central Railroad. Whatever their higher motives in supporting Union efforts, the pair did their best to favor the Pennsylvania's routings at the B&O's expense, a task made easier by the subsequent intermittent Confederate destruction of B&O facilities.

Aware of the aroused passions and potential political capital of the April 19 riot, Maryland's Governor Hicks, Baltimore mayor George Brown, and the city council hastily convened. The governor had been under pressure to call a special session of the state legislature throughout the secession crisis, and the General Assembly convened on April 26, but it refused a call for a secession convention. Over the next few weeks, Maryland's secessionist fires cooled and reason slowly prevailed as more-temperate voices drowned out secessionists. Marylanders began to think twice about the likely consequences of secession. Perhaps it was the menacing Union presence around Baltimore or the destruction of and threats against the state's commercial lifeline, the B&O, that persuaded many Marylanders and, most importantly, legislators, to take a more cautious view of secession. Even a personal, hand-carried invitation from Virginia to join the Confederacy got the cold shoulder from Maryland lawmakers.

More than likely Marylanders, no matter how much some may have sympathized with the South, faced the same reality that Garrett did—a state dependent on northern and western commerce dare not sever those critical lifelines. Maryland's reluctance to secede struck a blow to the Confederacy, which also failed to convince Kentucky and Missouri to join the Southern cause. Winning over these border states, which had higher white populations and more industry than the Deep South and produced significant quantities of food, would have carried a great advantage for the Confederacy.

Not all Baltimoreans acquiesced to the Union occupation, with many flagrantly showing their disapproval. "Secesh" women wore Confederate-inspired dresses, and anti-Union signs could be seen fluttering from windows. William Howard Russell, an English journalist visiting the city in the spring of 1861, wrote, "The Secession newspapers in Baltimore have been suppressed, but the editors contrive nevertheless to show their sympathies in the selection of their extracts."⁵² Secessionists still gathered at their favorite hotspots, the Holliday Street Theatre or the Maryland Club. James Ryder Randall, a Baltimorean living in New Orleans, composed what would become the state song, "Maryland, My Maryland," a nine-stanza poem chastising what Randall felt were brutish and vicious attacks on his beloved state.

Henry Garrett loudly chimed in with the secessionist chorus. "As to Maryland," he optimistically wrote to a New York business associate as the Southern states seceded, "she will of course go with the Southern *Constitution* loving and obeying states, rather than with the Union-loving (!!!) lawbreakers of the North."⁵³ Not all "lawbreakers" resided in the North; some were right in Henry Garrett's backyard. He wrote to his mother, complaining that he suspected federal troops occupying Baltimore had discovered the Garretts' country estate of Lansdowne and, to relieve the tedium of guard duty, slipped away to feast on the fields' fresh produce and ride the horses.⁵⁴

Despite Henry's disloyal sentiments and the suspicion that swirled around John Garrett himself, Lincoln trusted John from the start, dismissing rumors of the latter's pro-Southern sympathies. Lincoln's longtime friend and confidante, Ward Hill Lamon, attested to Lincoln's positive attitude toward Garrett. "I know Mr. Garrett and I like him very much," Lincoln once remarked. "I don't believe all the things people say about his secessionist principles."⁵⁵ Many of Lincoln's top commanders came from railroad backgrounds, and the president offered Garrett a generalship, but Garrett refused, preferring to keep his position with the B&O.⁵⁶

Virginia's secession set a dangerous precedent for the upper portion of the South and the border states, and Lincoln knew he could not let secessionist fever burn too long in Maryland. In April, Lincoln directed Union troops to arrest anyone suspected of treason or pro-Southern sympathies, and he ordered General George Cadwalader to suspend the writ of habeas corpus along the military railway line from Baltimore to Philadelphia. In the first year of Lincoln's mandate, federal troops imprisoned 166 Marylanders, including John Merryman, who had led the attack on the Northern Central Railway after the April 19 riot. An observer at the time wrote: "At every quarter of a mile for the whole distance a picket of soldiers guarded the rails. Camps appeared on both sides, larger and more closely packed together."⁵⁷

Marylander Roger Brooke Taney, who, as chief justice of the US Supreme Court, had ruled in the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* case that African Americans, slave or free, were not citizens and therefore not protected by the Constitution, demanded that Cadwalader release Merryman, which the general refused to do. In June 1861, in the *Ex parte Merryman* case, Taney handed down his celebrated opinion on the importance of preserving civil liberties, even in wartime, stating that only Congress, not the president, could suspend habeas corpus. Cadwalader, unmoved and under a directive from Lincoln, held Merryman in prison for several more months. Lincoln's defiance continued. In September, he ordered Cameron to arrest several secessionist Maryland legislators on their way to a General Assembly meeting in Frederick.

Military commanders cast an even wider net and arrested ordinary Marylanders. The *Baltimore Sun* reported that one man was imprisoned simply for "hurrahing for

Jeff Davis.”⁵⁸ Union troops rounded up hundreds of Southern sympathizers, including Baltimore mayor George Brown and the entire Baltimore Board of Police, thought to have aided the rioters in the April 19 melee. Police Marshal George P. Kane, whose son eventually joined Mosby’s Raiders, the South’s guerilla soldiers, was found to have stashed an arsenal of Confederate-bound cannons, rifles, and ammunition in his warehouse. Similarly, Dr. John Hanson Thomas, whose elegant mansion stood at a corner of Mount Vernon Place, secreted arms in a concealed hideaway in his home. Millionaire Ross Winans—owner of one of the largest railroad machine shops in the nation, manufacturer of the Winans’ Camel, and a vocal secessionist—was suspected of designing a steam-powered artillery piece for the Confederates and was jailed.⁵⁹ An observer noted that Garrett discreetly arranged for many of his “rash friends” to be released from prison “after they had been there long enough to repent of their hasty words,” Winans among them.⁶⁰ Even Baltimore’s street gangs took sides, with the notorious Plug Uglies supporting the Union. Some Southern sympathizers escaped in the nick of time. Millionaire financier William Walters fled Baltimore to wait out the war in Europe. Union guards reportedly stopped Walters en route in New York for interrogation, but he was allowed to proceed when Secretary of War Cameron intervened.

The Brothers’ War

Henry Garrett was not so lucky. The Union’s wide net snagged him. While John Garrett worked tirelessly to prove his support for the Union in the early months of 1861, Henry Garrett strove just as zealously to prove his loyalty to the Confederacy. For the Garretts, as for many families in Maryland, the Civil War indeed epitomized a “Brothers’ War,” so named for the divisiveness and torn loyalties it caused within families.

Despite their political differences, as the Garrett brothers reached their forties, they resembled each other physically. Both were big men, over six feet in height. John had filled out considerably from his lean, angular twenties. He was described as “a man of large, commanding frame, more portly than his father, his face full with a large forehead, heavy eyebrows, and a firm mouth.”⁶¹ The *Baltimore Sun* found him to be “large, with strongly marked features indicative of great will power and an immense capacity for will power.”⁶² Henry Garrett, too, displayed his brother’s propensity to portliness; those who knew him described his “manly, massive form.”⁶³ Henry was “genial, full of pleasantry and most companionable,” an observer later recalled, “having a mind accustomed to observation and sound reflection.”⁶⁴ He could also be compassionate to a fault. He campaigned to have the death sentence of James R. Power, a condemned man who was a stranger to him, commuted to life in

prison and received a heartfelt letter from the prisoner—"a poor fatherless boy"—thanking Henry for sparing his life.⁶⁵

But Henry Garrett's infinite compassion and sound reflection were not unbiassed. He continued to skew dangerously and publicly toward the Confederacy—and treasonable behavior. After the firing on Fort Sumter, he sent a reward, a gift of a shawl, to General P. G. T. Beauregard, who had ordered the attack. Beauregard replied, "The earliest opportunity will be seized by myself and the gallant troops under my command to offer [Maryland] all the assistance in our power and to visit upon the heads of her vile oppressors, the punishment they have so richly deserved."⁶⁶ Days later, Henry wrote to George Peabody in London, "The greatest of our national troubles seems to be the incompetence & unfitness of the present administration who were elected to maintain one bad idea."⁶⁷

Although Henry Garrett enjoyed a reputation as a respected businessman and had served as a valued economic adviser to President James Buchanan, he also was unabashedly anti-Union and a ringleader in the rabble-rousing Maryland Club, a caldron of secessionists whose primary pastime was plotting against the federal government. The Maryland Club, a stone's throw from Henry Garrett's mansion on Mount Vernon Place—ensuring his regular attendance and troublemaking—ranked as Baltimore's most prestigious social club. Founded in 1857, its first president was Jerome Bonaparte, the son of Baltimorean Elizabeth Patterson, who was the first wife of Napoleon's youngest brother. Maryland Club members cheered at the firing on Fort Sumter and egged on the Southern states as they joined the Confederacy one by one. They worked to push Maryland in the same direction.

In case anyone doubted the seriousness of the South's intentions, Henry Garrett wrote to newspaper editors that they need only to travel through the South "to see and judge for themselves the Extent and Nature of Warlike preparedness by the Southern people for what they view as another War of Independence, which they are fully determined to fight."⁶⁸ Maryland Club members shared Henry's sentiments and devised their own "underground railroad"—much different from the one that spirited slaves to freedom in the North—stockpiling arms to ship to the Confederacy. General Butler, aware of the treasonous activities of the Maryland Club, threatened that if its members continued to stir up trouble, he "would put a bullet through it."⁶⁹ Undeterred, the clubmen continued plotting and planning, with Henry Garrett as a main agitator. "My father's only brother was always doing things that put him in danger of arrest," Mary Garrett wrote.⁷⁰

As was inevitable, Henry was arrested, much to the horror and embarrassment of his family. Surprisingly, discreet assistance came from an unlikely source. Secretary of War Cameron, who, just weeks earlier, had threatened to wipe out all B&O tracks that could be used for rebel transport, came to the Garretts' aid: "Learning that Henry

Garrett has been arrested for some supposed want of loyalty to the government of the United States, I hereby order his release until this department shall have investigated the subject.”⁷¹ Reverdy Johnson, John Garrett’s attorney and a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, who four years later would become involved in the trial of Lincoln’s assassins, assured John of a positive outcome: “Your brother Henry’s case will not be reached for several days yet. When it is reached, if all the witnesses are here, as I do not suppose they will be, it will be postponed or continued.”⁷²

Henry’s case was never heard, nor did his arrest subdue his Southern sympathies. He remained openly rebellious. But he was never again arrested, more than likely due to his brother’s pivotal role with the B&O. Throwing John Garrett’s brother in jail for treason in the critical months of 1861 might have seriously hampered the delicate relationship between Washington, DC, and the B&O. Mary Garrett later wrote that her uncle “would certainly have been in prison if it had not been for their confidence of my father in Washington.”⁷³

It is hard to imagine when or if John Garrett got any relief from the daily turmoil of his life. When he was working in his office at Camden Station, Rachel often took lunch or dinner to her husband and sat with him for a short while to talk. When possible, Garrett preferred to work in his library at home. His daughter remembered the early months of the war as being endlessly tumultuous in their house: “Our life was irregular, to the degree, as we always waited for my father. His hours were very uncertain.”⁷⁴ For the Garrett children, relatively young at the start of the war—Robert II, 14; Harry, 12; Henry, 10; and Mary, 4—that uncertainty also brought excitement and adventure into their otherwise routine lives. “Interesting men from all over the country were coming and going all the time about all sorts of things,” Mary recalled. Those men included politicians, Cabinet members, B&O officials and other railroad presidents, and top military commanders. Edwin Stanton, who would soon replace Cameron as secretary of war, and Salmon P. Chase, the secretary of the treasury, frequently visited the Garrett home. Mary noted that she loved to curl up inconspicuously in a chair in the corner of her father’s library, listening to the “interesting men” talk about war and railroads. Besides the turmoil of their father’s chaotic schedule, the children might also have sensed the disagreement and dissension within the family: their Uncle Henry and their mother’s family sided with the Confederacy. As Garrett fretted over the fractures in his family and in the nation, he watched carefully as two formidable figures began to move into his life.

The First Front

John Garrett had clear priorities in 1861. He had to keep his railroad operational and profitable under adverse conditions, while also focusing his attention on the war

and the increasing role of the B&O. As the aftermath of the April 19 riot had shown, the B&O was a big moving target—for troops and citizens alike. On April 26, a crewman from Cumberland, fearful of the increasing violence along B&O tracks in Western Maryland, advised Garrett “to put additional guards on your trains because the Republican fever is strong—there are fights between Union men, Republicans, and secessionists.”⁷⁵

Early in the war, Union and Confederate military maneuvers began slicing the B&O into three separate geographical sections: the easternmost part, which included the Washington Branch and the Main Stem from Baltimore to Harpers Ferry; the center section of the Main Stem, extending 100 miles from Harpers Ferry west to Cumberland; and the western portion of the Main Stem and all of the Branch Line to Parkersburg, which lay in the Union-sympathizing region of western Virginia.⁷⁶ Each section would feel the rebels’ wrath, but the center one bore the brunt of Confederate battles in the Shenandoah Valley. In the years ahead, there was “not a bridge, not an engine house or shop, scarcely a mile of track along this rugged line through northern Virginia that escaped the prolonged and destructive violence of rebel armies.”⁷⁷ The B&O earned the unwelcome distinction as the war’s “first front,” since the primary goal of the Confederacy in the early months was to disrupt the traffic flow on this vital railroad.⁷⁸

Within the first months of the war, two of the most brilliant military strategists of the Confederacy, Robert E. Lee and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, began to wreak havoc on the B&O. Garrett knew Lee well. A decade before his 1859 capture of John Brown at Harpers Ferry, the then 41-year-old Colonel Lee, son of Revolutionary War hero Henry “Light Horse Harry” Lee of Virginia, arrived in Baltimore to oversee the construction of Fort Carroll, a six-sided fortress on the city’s outer harbor. Lee moved with his wife, Mary Anna Randolph Custis Lee, and their three sons and four daughters to a townhouse at 908 Madison Street, on Mount Vernon Place, where they lived for three years. Baltimore society instantly embraced the handsome officer and his famous wife, who was Martha Washington’s great-granddaughter. In 1852, when Congress failed to appropriate additional funds to complete the fort, Lee was appointed superintendent of the US Military Academy at West Point, where he had graduated second in his class in 1829. Lee was also familiar with the B&O. In 1838, Lee and fellow West Pointer and army officer Montgomery Meigs were on assignment near Frederick, Maryland. There, Lee rode on a railroad for the first time—the B&O—and commented, “The cars [still] had to be drawn by horses for part of the distance.”⁷⁹

A born military man, Lee served in the US Army for thirty-two years. He spoke against secession, even ridiculing the new Confederate States in early 1861. General Winfield Scott, then the longest-serving commander in the military, considered Lee

to be the “greatest soldier now living.”⁸⁰ At the outbreak of the war, Lincoln tried to persuade Lee to take command of the Union Army. Instead, Lee resigned his commission to take command of all Virginia’s state forces and, after the establishment of the Confederate States Army, soon rose to become general of the Army of Northern Virginia. With great reluctance and emotion, he vowed to defend his beloved state of Virginia, explaining he could not “raise a hand against relatives [and] children at home.”⁸¹ It was an agonizing decision for Lee, but ultimately he was more “Virginian” than “American.” By the outbreak of the war, the nation’s Constitution was a mere 72 years old. Virginia, the oldest English colony in North America, had been established 254 years before, and the patrician Lees had been among the colony’s earliest settlers. Robert E. Lee’s loyalties lay with his ancestral state, not the nation.

A fellow Virginian, 37-year-old Thomas Jackson, earned the moniker “Stonewall” for his fierce and unyielding stand against the Union at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861. An unlikely warrior, he had taught experimental philosophy and artillery for ten years at the Virginia Military Institute, where he was uniformly unpopular with the students for his memorized, agonizingly boring lectures. He was orphaned as a child and was a stern Presbyterian, highly religious and pious, as well as inflexible and enigmatic. Jackson joined the Confederacy as a colonel in the state militia but quickly moved up the ranks, transforming himself into a military legend. Virginia governor John Letcher assigned him to command the regiments stationed at Harpers Ferry in 1861, and Jackson was soon promoted to brigadier general. Riding atop his favorite horse, Little Sorrel, he led audacious, unrelenting assaults by sheer daring and, most importantly, with a thorough knowledge of his opponents and of battlefield terrain. Jackson was among the first commanders to effectively use maps to site future offenses, calling on the most well-known cartographer of the day, Major Jedediah Hotchkiss, to chart the terrain of the Confederate’s first campaign—the 2,000-square-mile Shenandoah Valley.⁸² It was not long before Lee noticed Jackson’s brazen tactics. Together, they became a force to be reckoned with and managed to put the B&O out of business between Harpers Ferry and Cumberland for much of the first year of the war.

Lee did not want to antagonize fellow Virginians in the northwestern part of the state, who already were agitating to disengage from Virginia and whose Northern economic ties, primarily via the B&O, were critical to their livelihood, so at first he tolerated the B&O’s tracks, particularly considering the company’s many pro-Southern investors.⁸³ Calling for Confederate enlistees from northwestern Virginia specifically to protect the B&O from attack, Lee got few responses.⁸⁴ Lee never gained the strategic foothold he needed before that region ultimately formed the new Union state of West Virginia in 1863.

Making sure Lee stayed his distance was Union general George B. McClellan, another longtime colleague of Garrett's. Before joining the US Army, McClellan had been a member of the small, elite circle of railroad presidents, having served as head of the Mississippi and Ohio Railroad. He had worked under then secretary of war Jefferson Davis in the Peirce administration in the 1850s and, like Lee, was a West Pointer, graduating second in the class of 1846. Not yet displaying the overly cautious timidity that would later doom his career, McClellan successfully drove back Confederate forces from northern Virginia in the summer of 1861, ensuring that this critical area would stay in Union hands and the B&O tracks would remain operational.

But Garrett's worries were far from over. Jackson had other plans for the B&O that were not quite as benevolent as Lee's. The B&O was among the sturdiest of railroads, built for heavy-duty coal hauling through the mountains. The Confederates coveted the B&O, with its massive eight- and ten-wheel engines. Within the first few months of the war, acting largely on his own initiative, Jackson revealed the star quality that soon catapulted him into legend. Positioned near Harpers Ferry in June 1861, he watched as B&O trains daily traversed the region with crucial supplies for Northern troops—provisions and locomotives and cars Jackson knew the Confederacy desperately needed. He asked Garrett to contain the traffic to a two-hour window, from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The constant noise of the trains, Jackson shrewdly explained to Garrett, was disturbing his troops. Garrett complied, knowing that if he refused, Jackson might demolish the crucial forty-four-mile, double-track stretch.

Within days, Jackson sprang his trap. The Quartermaster Department in Richmond sent Captain Thomas R. Sharp to take a crew of machinists and teamsters to Martinsburg, in northwestern Virginia, and seize B&O cars and equipment. In what would pass down in railroad lore as the "Great Train Raid," Sharp's troops brazenly pirated fourteen B&O locomotives, eighty-three railcars, nine miles of track, five switches, and a complete turntable. The South, lagging in industry, could not build its own rolling stock and found stealing Union trains to be much easier. Like bandits showing off their newfound quarry, the rebel troops triumphantly took apart and dragged the locomotives and railcars thirty-five miles over land, hauling them up the Valley Turnpike to Strasburg, Virginia. Observers commented on the awe-inspiring enormity of the event—disassembling the locomotives and methodically moving the heavy parts by teams of forty horses. At times the road beneath would give out from the weight. It took from May 1861 until March 1862 for the heist to "make the Gap," where the equipment was reassembled on the Manassas Gap Railroad and sent to Richmond for use by Southern railroads.

Jackson was not yet through with the B&O. A few weeks after the raid, he let loose with a frenzy of destruction not yet seen in the three-month-old war. He burned all the bridges between Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg; torched locomotives and cars, setting fire to coal-laden hoppers and sending them careening off bridges; and tore down 102 miles of telegraph lines.⁸⁵ The telegraph already had become essential to war communications, and destroyed lines had to be repaired immediately. Repairmen took on one of the riskiest civilian jobs in the war; many died or were taken prisoner trying to patch the lines together.⁸⁶

The veracity of the Great Train Raid is still debated among many railroad historians. How could Garrett have allowed such a monumental robbery in plain sight?⁸⁷ As proof, however, on July 17, 1865, a reporter for the *New York World* took a draft of an article he had written, "The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad: Adventures of a Railroad During the War," and submitted it to Garrett for approval. Garrett made notations on the margin, verifying the event.⁸⁸

Jackson's audacious strategies of capture-and-destroy essentially closed off the portion of B&O's Main Stem from Harpers Ferry to east of Cumberland, Maryland, for ten months, from June 1861 to March 1862, and opened up the otherwise bucolic, pastoral Shenandoah Valley to some of the worst bloodshed of the early months of the war. In one incident, the Confederates destroyed a bridge in the path of an oncoming B&O train, hurling fifty loaded coal cars into a chasm, where they burned for two months, melting axles and wheels.⁸⁹ The shutdown cost the B&O \$700,000 in revenues.⁹⁰ Jackson's destructive tactics might have had immediate military results for the Confederacy, but the excessive and unnecessary destruction of Maryland's economic lifeline did little to endear Marylanders, and Northerners in general, to the rapidly escalating war.

Garrett complained about the wanton destruction on his line, but there were few friends to whom he could turn in 1861. Secretary of War Cameron paid little heed to Garrett's calls for intervention during Jackson's uncontrolled plunder of the B&O; in fact, Cameron showed blatant hostility toward Garrett's entreaties.⁹¹ With much of the B&O shut down in 1861–1862, Cameron enjoyed the hefty profits being made by other railroads, including his pride and joy, the Northern Central. Garrett and the B&O fought the first year of the war primarily on their own. The military and the federal government did not defend the B&O against Confederate attacks or help make repairs until the spring of 1862.

The destruction on the B&O during the first months of the war was so extensive that Garrett and his officers could not present a complete accounting of the B&O's finances in the 1861 *Annual Report*. At the December 18, 1861, stockholders' meeting, Garrett stated, "Unhappily, the continuance of the war involving great and repeated

destruction of the works and property of the Company has precluded the president and officers from obtaining information that would be their duty to furnish to all interested in the road."⁹² Six months later, the extent of the damage still could not be ascertained. Garrett noted at the May 1, 1862, board meeting that "the anomalous condition of affairs connected with the Company's operations arising out of the war made it impossible for us, at the appropriate period, to present the *Annual Report* ending September 30, 1861."⁹³

The volley of destruction and the necessity of extensive, costly repairs on his road outraged Garrett. If the April 19 riot had begun to turn his loyalties to the Union cause, Jackson's rampage sealed Garrett's allegiance to the North. He now referred to the Confederacy as "the enemy." Increasingly, "rebels," instead of "Southern friends" punctuated his speeches.⁹⁴ He became "a Union man," his daughter wrote, "but he was alone in his family."⁹⁵ He now fought to preserve two divided houses, his own and the nation's.

A Southern Line No More

1862–1863

BY THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1862, the war that few initially thought would last beyond the first battle had escalated and become more brutal, with no end to the conflict in sight. The Confederates had proven their mettle at Bull Run, honed their defensive strategies, and intensified their attacks over the first year. What the Confederacy lacked in resources and troops, it more than made up for in tenacity, vigor, and astute military leadership. By 1862, the war clearly would be long and bloody.

Garrett by then had survived the vicious antiloyalty rumors that had undermined his credibility through the first year of the war. The US House of Representatives' Committee on Contracts, in a report issued in the summer, found that "John W. Garrett has been most unjustly suspected as a noisy sympathizer of treason," adding that B&O directors, "who have been constantly denounced as disloyal," also were exonerated.¹ The committee stated for the record, "The insinuation of treason, it seems, is entirely the invention of malice." And the source of that malice? The committee found that competitors, eager to "overload the Northern Central and the Pennsylvania Central routes with Government patronage," held the blame for casting aspersions on Garrett and B&O directors, who "had displayed consistent loyalty to the government, always on alert to serve it, and without fraud or ill practice." The same could not be said for Simon Cameron and his associate, Tom Scott. "The evidence is not complimentary to Secretary of War Simon Cameron nor is it so to Col. Thomas Scott," the committee concluded.

Cameron may have been an adept businessman and politician, but he turned out to be inept at running the large, complex War Department that was constantly in the midst of crisis. Added to that, he had appointed cronies to key posts in the department, and the subsequent corruption, particularly in military procurement contracts, became a public scandal. Lincoln had enough and abruptly fired Cameron in January 1862. But the president decently gave him a face-saving exit by allowing

Cameron to publicly "initiate" a request to leave the cabinet post in favor of an appointment as ambassador to Russia. Cameron expressed gratitude to Lincoln for preserving whatever good reputation he might have had.² Garrett felt palpable relief at Cameron's departure. "Genl. Cameron was the great incubus upon our interests in Washington," Garrett wrote to Thomas Donaldson, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, when he heard the news. "The change in the Secy. Of War is therefore a great relief."³ Cameron's fortuitous ouster by Lincoln and move to Russia in 1862 put a 5,000-mile buffer between Garrett and one of his major opponents.

No longer could anyone accuse the B&O of being a Southern line or suspect Garrett of disloyalty to the Union. By January 1862, William Prescott Smith, the master of transportation, reported that the B&O and its affiliate lines already had transported more than 650,000 Union troops in the first seven months of the war.⁴ In February of that year, the B&O board passed a resolution requiring all employees to take an oath of allegiance to the United States, an action prompted, in part, to spur the federal government into giving more protection to the embattled B&O. The company "had asked the aid of the United States government to secure the road between Balto and Wheeling and protect the travels of passengers and merchandise over the same," the directors noted at their February 12, 1862, meeting. "In the opinion of many citizens in the State of Maryland . . . the tardiness of the government is in part dependent upon the fact that there has been and now is a want of loyalty on the part of said company or some officers or employees and to reduce suspicion be it revolved that all employees effective March 1, 1862, [need] to repeat the oath before a Justice of the Peace."⁵ Garrett dismissed all B&O employees who refused to take the oath and who continued to show pro-Southern sympathies. The resolution had the desired effect. Soon after the company's public affirmation of allegiance, the government began restoring protection to B&O trains. "Prior to that, the destruction of the property, bridges, and tracks of the company was most extensive and serious in character," the directors reported at their October meeting.⁶

Long-delayed government and military aid for the B&O came from another source, as well: Edwin M. Stanton, an Ohio lawyer and a friend whom Garrett knew well and trusted, took over the War Department. Years earlier, Garrett's father had hired Stanton to collect on debts owed to RG&S in the Midwest, and Stanton later served as counsel for the Central Ohio Railroad when RG&S managed its finances. Consequently, over the years, John Garrett and Stanton had developed an easy working relationship and friendship. The two men shared a mutual respect and admiration. "Garrett liked Stanton," an observer noted, "and Stanton not only liked Garrett, but he had an abounding faith in him. Hence [Stanton's] willingness to comply, whenever it was possible, with Garrett's wishes and suggestions."⁷ "I have already had a very gratifying interview with Mr. Stanton," Garrett assured Donaldson. "I now

have strong hopes that the Co. will be treated with justice, & its interests & property receive much protection.”⁸ Stanton and Garrett communicated daily through the duration of the war.

Tom Scott resigned his War Department position in June 1862 but left an indelible mark. Earlier that year, Stanton, concerned about the condition of various railroads in the Midwest, had assigned Scott to make a careful survey of their capabilities. The results of Scott’s studies proved to be invaluable to Stanton in the short run, but, sadly for Garrett, they also served the Pennsylvania Railroad well as Scott and Thomson carried out their postwar expansion plans.

Already war-weary and tested, Garrett learned to keep up with the rebel ruin of the B&O. If he could not prevent it, then he could at least repair it as quickly as possible. After Northern troops took control of the lower Shenandoah Valley in March 1862, B&O workers quickly restored tracks, bridges, and buildings, sometimes sleeping in boxcars to keep up with repairs along the tracks. Workers learned to make the best of a bad situation: they took the rubble left behind from destroyed bridges and buildings, piled it up, and created temporary trestles for trains to cross. Garrett supervised the minutia of the repairs, traveling by train or often climbing on horseback to inspect the work. He could be seen laboring with the crews along the tracks.

Garrett tried to prepare for Confederate attacks on the B&O, knowing his railroad continued to be one of Lee’s and Jackson’s primary targets. “The enterprise and vigor of Jackson are well known,” he wrote to Stanton on May 18, as word of a future Confederate attack came to his attention, “and the great importance attached by the enemy to the destruction of the B&O Road accounts for his movements.”⁹ Garrett warehoused surplus railroad essentials when possible: bridge timbers, crossties, and rails. When emergencies arose, his stockpile was ready with replacements. The constant need for repairs along B&O tracks and for rolling stock kept Baltimore busy. “The iron foundries of Baltimore are numerous and important,” Horace P. Batcheler, an English visitor to Baltimore, noted in 1863. “You hear nothing but steam working, hammering, and tinkering from morn to night.”¹⁰ And those railroad repairs were costly. In 1861, the B&O spent \$42,613 to fix bridges; that figure tripled by the next year. The amount for locomotive repairs similarly jumped, from \$138,000 in 1861 to \$304,000 by 1863.¹¹ The federal government also compensated the railroads for the war-related business of transporting troops and equipment, although payments usually came through very slowly.¹² In the first year of the war, seventy-five railroads, including the B&O, each submitted bills of \$100,000 or more for transportation services.¹³

Through March 1862, Garrett kept his telegraphers busy, sending a flurry of his usual to-the-point dispatches to supervisors, ordering equipment and road materials, and requesting military guards along B&O lines to ward off future attacks. He

kept Stanton and the War Department apprised of the repairs.¹⁴ By the end of the month, efforts to fix the damaged rails and wooden bridge at Harpers Ferry had been completed, thanks to the herculean efforts of B&O workers. Although Garrett shied away from hiring a vice president, he relied heavily on William Prescott Smith, among many other capable workers, to keep all components of the line running as efficiently as possible.

Having finally shaken off any hint of Confederate sympathies, Garrett could now prove himself and the B&O's worth to the Union and to longtime customers. After nearly ten months of constant Confederate bombardment, the B&O finally reconnected to the Ohio River in March. Western shippers, merchants, and passengers alike cheered at the B&O's resurrection. Wanting to ensure the company's dominance in the region, Garrett lowered rates far below his northern competition and ordered all machinery to be in top-notch order. "Am pleased to learn of your progress in repairs of motive power," Garrett wrote to Thatcher Perkins, his master of machinery, after workers had repaired the latest Confederate damage, and, in anticipation of resuming business, added, "We will need all engines for our business as soon as you can prepare them."¹⁵ On March 30, 3,800 cars that had been logjammed in Maryland and Virginia at Cumberland, New Creek [later Keyser, West Virginia], and Martinsburg, once again rolled freely. Two days later, Wheeling celebrated with a 100-gun salute as the first B&O passenger train in almost a year chugged into town from Baltimore. Military guards stationed along the route stood ready for any signs of trouble.

There Was No Confederate Equivalent of John W. Garrett

The Confederacy could have used a tested and resourceful railroad president like Garrett and his sturdy, well-equipped road, especially one that ran through the key Confederate state of Virginia. Through the 1850s, the South had experienced a railroad boom. Long lagging behind the North, from 1850 to 1860 the South made headway and proportionately outpaced the North; of the 22,000 miles of new track put down in the United States, 7,000 had been in the states that eventually seceded.¹⁶ That was not enough, however, to keep up with the North. At the onset of the war, the South had only 9,000 of the total 30,000 miles of rail nationwide; most of the country's 300 railroads sided with the North.¹⁷ Southern production of pig iron, an essential ingredient in the railroads, fell woefully behind the North by a ratio of 20:1.¹⁸

Of most concern, despite the railroad expansion of the previous decade, by 1861 the South's railroad system consisted mostly of local lines connecting neighboring towns and commercial hubs. Ironically, while serving as secretary of war in the Pierce administration in the 1850s, Jefferson Davis had supervised the Pacific rail-

road surveys to find the best routes for a future transcontinental railroad, one that would eventually connect the nation by rail in 1869. But now, in his new Southern domain, the Confederate president faced a highly deficient rail system, a point made clear on his rail journey to his inauguration: he had to travel a circuitous 750 miles from his home in Jackson, Mississippi, to Montgomery, Alabama, 250 miles away.¹⁹

Unlike sturdy, heavy-duty Northern lines such as the B&O, built to carry tons of coal through the mountains and already prepared to transport heavy combat equipment at the start of the war, Southern railroads traversed relatively flat terrain and were, for the most part, lightly and hastily built, as were their bridges and trestles.²⁰ The South did not have major trunk lines, like the B&O and the other main lines of the North that, despite internecine bickering and rate wars, essentially glued the Northern railroads together, resulting in relatively easy movement from one region to the next.²¹ There was only one main Southern line, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, which connected Lynchburg to Bristol on the Virginia–Tennessee border. As the war intensified, the Confederacy could not expeditiously get food and supplies to its troops by rail, as the North could. Early in the war, Lee recognized the importance of railroads when he expressed concern over the Confederacy's rail capabilities. "I consider it very important to the military operations in Virginia," he wrote in June 1861, "that proper and easy connections of the several railroads passing through or terminating in Richmond or Petersburg should be made promptly as possible."²²

Perhaps the South's greatest failure in the first years of the war was its inability to organize what few railroads it did have and assemble them into an all-out coordinated system. The oligarchical mentality that ruled the South's planter class also extended to the region's few industrial magnates, who remained reluctant to surrender their autocracy and work toward the common good of the Confederacy. Similarly, Southern railroad presidents did not want their equipment to be absconded by rivals or pressed into service by the government.²³ In 1862, Confederate secretary of war George Wythe Randolph appointed "the ablest railroad official in the South," William M. Wadley, as superintendent of railroad transportation for the Confederacy. Wadley organized some semblance of a department to carry out his duties. But he faced a difficult task in trying to exert government control and came to realize that railroad presidents bowed to the needs of their stockholders, not the Confederate government.²⁴ Southern railroad men viewed their companies as the primary conveyance to transport the South's lifeblood—cotton—and did not look beyond their own interests to cooperate or to relinquish their control, unlike Northern rail presidents, who cooperated with Lincoln and Stanton.

Lincoln realized the importance of coordinating the Northern railroads and telegraphs. In 1862, Congress passed the Railways and Telegraph Act, which allowed the

government to seize and operate any railroad or telegraph company's equipment for the war effort. The act created the United States Military Railroad (USMRR) and the United States Military Telegraph Corps. Lincoln turned over responsibility to Secretary of War Stanton, who appointed Colonel Daniel C. McCallum, later promoted to brevet brigadier general, as head of the USMRR, with Herman Haupt as supervisor of construction.

A West Point graduate, former Gettysburg College professor, and civil engineer, Haupt excelled in the intricacies of railroad construction and had been the Pennsylvania Railroad's chief operating officer. In his USMRR post, Haupt held responsibility for repairing, constructing, and operating trains that fell under the jurisdiction of the USMRR. Haupt's instructions guaranteed a hands-off approach unless absolutely necessary, assuring railroad presidents of their autonomy.²⁵ Reportedly, he could almost perform miracles, which mightily impressed Lincoln. In May 1862, Haupt faced the challenge of rebuilding the critical thirteen-mile stretch of railroad tracks and a bridge running from Aquia Creek to Falmouth on the Virginia side of the Potomac River; the retreating Confederates had destroyed it all. Haupt quickly organized his 300 troops to harvest two million feet of local timber and completed the task in a record nine days. Haupt later told Stanton that when Lincoln inspected the work, he remarked to his aides that the bridge was "the most remarkable structure that human eyes have ever rested upon. That man Haupt has built a bridge four hundred feet long and one hundred feet high, across Potomac Creek, on which loaded trains are passing every hour, and upon my word, gentlemen, there is nothing in it but cornstalks and beanpoles."²⁶

The USMRR's reach pertained to Southern railroads captured during war and was not enforced on the Northern lines, except under extenuating circumstances. The law simply ensured that all of the federal government's war demands would be a priority. In May, Stanton placed the B&O under control of the War Department, but this did not compromise the railroad's ownership or Garrett's authority. Throughout the war, Garrett readily made the B&O available at Stanton's or Lincoln's request.

By contrast, Jefferson Davis held no legal authority over Confederate railroads until February 1865, about two months before Robert E. Lee surrendered his army at Appomattox. There was no Confederate equivalent of John W. Garrett or Thomas A. Scott, both of whom adeptly coordinated military requirements with corporate capabilities to support Union efforts, nor was there a Confederate Military Railroad, comparable to the USMRR, to support the South's armies.²⁷

Despite keeping B&O lines open in the state and region as best he could and increasing freight and passenger traffic during the war, Garrett faced trouble closer to home. Not everyone supported a B&O president who represented private interests (i.e., shareholders) over public interests (e.g., the state of Maryland and the city

of Baltimore). The decades-old division between the two competing board factions continued unabated. In 1862, die-hard Unionist John Lee Chapman won election as Baltimore's mayor. Never convinced of Garrett's loyalty to the North, an allegation Chapman kept alive throughout the war, he also accused Garrett of using the B&O for personal monetary gain and, to boot, mismanaging it financially. Most problematic for Garrett, Chapman vigorously advocated for public ownership of the B&O and criticized the transportation monopoly that he claimed the B&O held in the city and the state. Chapman favored public funding of the smaller Western Maryland Railroad, claiming to represent the interests of Western Maryland coal owners, who wanted more-competitive rates for shipping. Chapman also often sided with Tom Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad, another sore point with Garrett. Perhaps calling on his college debate team tactics, Garrett never shied away from defending his views—or integrity. After rebutting each of Chapman's charges, Garrett requested that the B&O's finance committee submit a detailed report to the mayor. In return, Garrett demanded that Chapman abandon his defamation campaign. As to the charges of creating a monopoly in Maryland, Garrett defended his efforts to keep the B&O dominant, stating that the business-minded B&O directors held the responsibility for keeping the B&O viable and nipping competition in the bud.

Four years into his B&O presidency, Garrett had become a victim of his own success, at least in making the railroad's bottom line look profitable. In 1862, the 30 percent dividend he had pushed for six years earlier, while a director, brought the city of Baltimore another 10,000 shares of stock and four additional B&O directors, for a total of twelve.²⁸ The public/private membership of the board now shifted and was too lopsided for Garrett's liking: twenty-two directors representing public interests, and twelve aligning with private ownership. He stealthily finessed the situation. When the city put its 10,000 shares on the open market, the Garretts and RG&S bought the bulk of them. Garrett again thwarted the public-interest faction and Chapman by putting the board back to a more balanced representation, with additional private-interest board members. Individually and collectively (through RG&S), the Garretts slowly and methodically acquired a block of shares second only to Johns Hopkins, the largest private shareholder. A group of Baltimore businessmen, disgruntled with Garrett, took their complaints to a higher authority, meeting with Lincoln at the White House and demanding Garrett's ouster. Lincoln had grown too dependent on the B&O and thus demurred, saying, "When any or all of you have done half as much to aid this Government as John W. Garrett has done, I may consider your request."²⁹

Despite Lincoln's confidence in John, as the war intensified, the treasonous antics of Garrett's brother grew more troublesome. Nothing could diminish Henry Garrett's faith in the Confederacy and his outspoken support of it. Henry's arrest

the year before did little to subdue his Southern sympathies, and merciless attacks on the B&O by Jackson and Lee only strengthened his resolve toward the rebel cause. In March 1862, Henry asked Stanton for permission to visit Confederate prisoners. Stanton refused. Not long after, an observer wrote that on one occasion in Baltimore, Henry saw "in an open wagon, a sick and aged [Confederate] prisoner [of war] without coat or coverlet [and] exposed to the cold and sleet." Without hesitation, Henry pushed "through the guards at the risk of arrest or violence, [and] drew off his overcoat and spread it over the man."³⁰ After receiving a request from a Confederate soldier imprisoned in Fort Delaware, Henry sent him the hefty sum of \$25, equivalent to two months' working wages, with a note stating, "I do not know this man."³¹ Henry remained an ardent devotee of and correspondent with Clement Vallandigham, a two-term Ohio Congressman, fervent states' rights supporter, and leader of the Copperhead antiwar Democrats, who called for a peaceable severing of the Union.³²

As the war continued into its second year, increasing numbers of B&O employees received the all-too-familiar wartime missive: "You are hereby notified that you have been drafted into the militia forces of the United States in the State of Maryland."³³ Losing valuable employees to the Union Army became problematic for Garrett. While many employees no doubt wanted to serve in the military—and others possibly did not—Garrett could not afford to lose skilled employees at a time when the B&O was becoming absolutely critical to the federal government. Garrett asked his department heads to identify essential employees who had been drafted. In October 1862, Garrett wrote a typical request to the Office of Assistant Adjutant General and Superintendent of Enrollment in Baltimore for the "release from duty" of seven employees. He explained that these employees "were essential to the safe working of the road and to the interests of the government in which they are in fact serving." The requests were granted. Garrett would write many similar requests in the years ahead for other valuable employees.³⁴

A draft deferment did not ensure safety from combat for B&O employees, however. In the early years of the war, Confederate troops captured many B&O crewmen on nonmilitary trains traveling through Virginia, as well as telegraph repairmen working on the lines paralleling B&O tracks. They were incarcerated, mostly at Libby Prison, Richmond's notorious facility on the James River, with more than 1,000 Union captives crammed into a small warehouse. Filthy conditions, disease, and lack of food led to a terrible mortality rate. A year after Stanton had denied Henry Garrett's request to visit Confederate prisoners, in June 1863, several B&O employees who had been captured in Bridgeport, Virginia, and imprisoned at Libby sent a letter to John Garrett, pleading for their release. They had worked as bridge men, trackmen, trainmen, and tunnel men. Garrett dispatched his brother to Richmond

to check on their welfare. Not surprisingly, Henry Garrett found the prison conditions shocking: “350–400 U.S. officers in the most deplorable condition for want of clothes, which cannot be got there. Large majority are lousy from head to foot and something ought to be done for their relief.”³⁵ It is likely Garrett’s close relationship with Stanton made the release of some of the B&O prisoners possible. Other internees were not so lucky. “Libby takes in captured Federals by the score,” the *New York Herald* reported, “but lets none out.”³⁶

Despite the differences in their outward political allegiances, John and Henry remained close as John steered the B&O and Henry presided over the family business. When not handling B&O matters, John kept up with RG&S, often using the family firm to purchase B&O shares or advance railroad bonds. Henry Garrett complained to friends that the war had given John “a very disagreeable irksome duty in his *official life* and [he] is most of the time in Washington” and, regrettably to Henry, who greatly admired his brother’s financial capabilities, had turned “a good banker into a railroad man.”³⁷ John did spend a large amount of time in Washington, DC, not only meeting with Lincoln and Stanton, but also testifying before Congress on matters relating to the war.

The Garretts maintained other important ties and friendships in Washington, notably with former president James Buchanan and Salmon Chase, secretary of the treasury under Lincoln. Lifelong bachelors, Henry Garrett and Buchanan shared a passion for the Democratic Party and regularly corresponded.³⁸ As the war wore on, the Garretts increased their communication with Chase. The treasury secretary respected John Garrett’s business sense, often asking his advice on banking bills before Congress and meeting with Garrett in Washington, DC, and Baltimore.³⁹

The Garretts strengthened other valuable relationships during the war, particularly with George Peabody and Junius Morgan and his son, J. Pierpont Morgan. John and Henry Garrett continued another generation of the profitable business arrangements with Peabody’s company that their father had begun decades earlier. At the start of the war, J. Pierpont left London to establish a New York firm to represent Peabody and Company in the United States. By the age of 25, he started building a name for himself, and a reputation—not always good. Some of his early financial schemes came under suspicion. During the Civil War, he allegedly bought 5,000 government-liquidated defective carbines, capable of severely maiming soldiers, and resold them to the government for a profit. Nonetheless, he proved himself to the Garretts. The new Garrett-Morgan business alliance evolved into friendship, similar to Robert Garrett’s and George Peabody’s personal relationship a generation earlier, with visits back and forth between Baltimore and New York and exchanges of presents. Henry sent Morgan prized Maryland canvasback ducks, with Morgan returning the favor with pheasants.⁴⁰

By the early years of the war, RG&S and J. Pierpont Morgan and Company of New York were doing a brisk, mutually beneficial business. Through Morgan's firm, the Garretts handled flour and corn exports during the war, served as American shipping agents for British merchants, and continued to execute sales of railroad and state bonds, both domestically and abroad. In October 1863, Henry Garrett and Junius Morgan discussed the advantage of buying gold. "Gold may become more plenty and cheap next week from the small shipments and large Govt. disbursements," Henry wrote to Morgan. "Sec'y Chase tells us that \$500,000 [is] going to Europe weekly and agents report the Continental demand is increasing. If you can draw on us without loss of exchange for any purchases you may make, please do so—or say what is the best rate you can do."⁴¹ Never missing a possible financial opportunity, in that same letter the Garrett brothers offered to lease their prized Eutaw House Hotel, where business had fallen flat during the war, and to rent the Howard House Hotel as a military hospital, advertising in 1863 that the building featured "gas fixtures and a fireproof vault in its offices." Neither venture materialized.

A Continuous Line of Fire

Keeping the family firm afloat by seeking new entrepreneurial and investment strategies during the war occupied less and less of Garrett's time. The B&O began to require his full attention as the war continued into its second year. Union blunders and astute Confederate leadership in the field lent hope to the Southern cause. Southern sympathizers like Henry Garrett remained confident. Jackson continued to be a menace in the Shenandoah, with attacks up and down the valley. With prodding from Lincoln, General George B. McClellan, called "the young Napoleon" early in his career, slowly moved his army to the Virginia Peninsula (bounded by the York and James Rivers) and almost reached the Confederate capital of Richmond before Lee thwarted him. Lee won another spectacular victory at the Second Battle of Bull Run in August 1862, when the Confederates again chased Union troops back to Washington, DC. Fought barely a year after the first battle, the Second Battle of Bull Run contrasted the great weaknesses and rivalries of Lincoln's top military leadership with the often-dazzling strategies and bravado of Lee and his best commanders.

In September, Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia crossed the Potomac River into Maryland. At Harpers Ferry, Confederate troops under Jackson surrounded the Union garrison of some ten thousand troops and unleashed artillery fury from seven hillside positions; the earth trembled and the noise was deafening. The Confederates took more than twelve thousand prisoners, the largest number of Union soldiers captured during the war.

Having brazenly divided his army, on September 17, 1862, Lee led 45,000 troops to the pastoral hills just west of Antietam Creek, near Sharpsburg, to what would become the single bloodiest day of the four-year war. The abundant orchards and fields of central Maryland at harvest time provided a welcome sight for the near-starving Confederates. Lee had hoped to find recruits among the local folks, but the sight of the ragged and war-weary rebel troops dissuaded potentially sympathetic Marylanders from supporting the Southern cause. Vastly outnumbered by McClellan's 80,000 troops, Lee's men nonetheless stood firm against waves of attacks, taking cover in the deep-burrowed tracks of a well-worn road and turning back the blue-coats as fast as they appeared. At the end of the day, the Union suffered 12,400 casualties; the South, 10,320.⁴²

Walt Whitman, searching for his soldier-brother, George Washington Whitman, after Antietam, later described the horror of seeing the primitive care given to the severely wounded soldiers in makeshift hospitals: "There was a very large barn & farm house—the barn was filled with wounded & the barn yard, and house as full as it could stick—a peaceful barn, now bloody, the fragrant hay they used to place the men on for operations—they turned the cattle out of their stalls."⁴³ A commentator noted, "The town was outnumbered with broken lives that outnumbered its population."⁴⁴ Many of the wounded were carted to Frederick for transport to hospitals on the B&O.

The carnage at Antietam appalled both the North and the South, with Southerners enraged that only Union dead would be buried there. Captain John Taggart of the Ninth Pennsylvania Reserves said simply of the carnage, "No tongue can tell, no mind conceive, no pen portray the horrible sights I witnessed this morning."⁴⁵ Antietam became a day of reckoning for the nation. Photographer Alexander Gardner's shocking photographs forever seared the American psyche. The nation now had to learn to deal with mass death on an unprecedented scale.

Lee retreated slowly, almost mockingly, from Antietam as McClellan failed to act. Lee avenged his battle losses by destroying everything in sight. Garrett wrote to McClellan regarding a message he had received from a B&O official describing the burnt section of the railroad. The "line of our road could be distinctly traced from Opequon to Paxton Cut [in Frederick County, Virginia] by a continuous line of fire" the Confederates left in their wake, the employee reported.⁴⁶ Jackson left his now-familiar calling card for the B&O, destroying every piece of its rolling stock within sight, nearly forty miles of track, the wooden trestle over the Potomac River, and the impressive three-span iron bridge over the Monocacy River near Frederick. Confederates tore up B&O rails, heating them over bonfires and twisting them around trees and poles as a grotesque reminder of the battle. They seized ninety miles of telegraph lines before continuing on their way.

In the next year's *Annual Report*, Garrett summarized the Confederates' near annihilation of the B&O at nearby Martinsburg, Virginia: "The polygonal engine house, the half round engine house, the large and costly machine shops, warehouse, ticket and telegraph offices, the Company's hotel and dining and wash houses, blacksmith shop and tool house, pumping engine for water station, and connecting pipes were all destroyed."⁴⁷ The damage effectively cut off the B&O from its rich markets in the Midwest, via the connections west of Wheeling on the Central Ohio Railroad.

For Lincoln, Antietam proved to be a mixed blessing—the first hopeful sign that the indomitable Robert E. Lee could be beaten and his march farther north stopped, at least for the moment. Because Lee had retreated, Lincoln considered the battle a Union victory, the first in the East in the initial eighteen months of the war. The Union's win at Antietam, however unclear, also gave Lincoln the impetus he needed to issue the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves in the seceding states. He made the proclamation public on January 1, 1863.

Antietam also signaled to Lincoln that one of his top commanders—the overly cautious, often haughty, and sometimes openly defiant McClellan—had again mishandled a crucial battle just months after his devastating defeat in the Peninsula Campaign in northern Virginia. McClellan's uncoordinated and uncertain assaults at Antietam allowed time for Confederate reinforcements under General A. P. Hill to arrive. But this support was not enough, and Lee's surge to the North was temporarily halted.

Two weeks after the battle, on October 3, Lincoln asked Garrett to accompany him to Antietam to meet with McClellan. The president often asked Garrett to travel with him to inspect battle sites, and Garrett insisted that the president ride in the lap of luxury in Garrett's grandiose personal railroad car, "Maryland." They climbed into a carriage on a foggy morning for the twenty-two-mile trip from the Frederick train station to the battlefield. Lincoln's friend, Ozias Hatch, the Illinois secretary of state, accompanied them. As they rode, they passed the wide span of once-fertile farmland, where they saw thousands of soldiers still lying in the blood-soaked fields, their wounds festering in the heat. By the end of that fateful meeting with Lincoln, McClellan's once-bright military trajectory crashed. He pleaded his case with the president, citing poor transportation and a lack of supplies. He argued that his army had to live on what they carried on their backs and had foraged for ten days, and that he needed at least forty wagons of supplies for every thousand men.⁴⁸ Unconvinced, Lincoln dismissed him.

On New Year's Eve 1862, the day before issuing the final Emancipation Proclamation, Lincoln signed the West Virginia Statehood Bill, creating the thirty-fifth state in the Union. The protracted process for independence from Virginia had taken two years, but it ended with a great victory—not only for the fifty northwestern

counties of Virginia, which formed the new state, but for Garrett and the B&O as well. Within a month of Virginia's secession in May 1861, representatives from the northwestern counties had met in Wheeling to discuss a bold plan: to secede from a seceding state. It presented a constitutional conundrum for Lincoln, Congress, and the new Confederacy. Virginia had been problematic to the B&O since its earliest expansion westward, and time had not improved the relationship between the company and the Commonwealth. "The Baltimore and Ohio railroad has been a positive nuisance to this state, from the opening of this war to the present," Virginia governor John Letcher pronounced to the Virginia legislature in September 1862, "and unless its management shall hereafter be in friendly hands, and the government under which it exists be part of the Confederacy, it must be abated."⁴⁹ His statement directly threatened the B&O and the residents of northwestern Virginia. The B&O needed to freely traverse the region, and farmers and merchants in the area depended on the B&O for passenger and freight transportation.

Garrett pushed the measure for independent statehood, supporting delegates representing the disaffected counties, particularly Peter Godwin Van Winkle, an influential politician and a founder of the 1861 Wheeling convention. Van Winkle had also served as president of the B&O-controlled Northwestern Virginia Railroad. Most citizens in the northwestern counties had fervently disagreed with the Commonwealth's secession from the Union. That section differed greatly from the rest of Virginia in geography, temperament, and culture. It also depended economically on the North, particularly adjacent Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Ohio. Western Virginians needed to keep the B&O running through their region; like Baltimoreans, they relied on the B&O as their economic lifeline.

On June 30, 1863, Congress admitted West Virginia to the Union—but not before leaving a trail of controversy. US Attorney General Edward Bates cautioned Lincoln that the recently granted statehood was unconstitutional and could open the door for more secession in other parts of the country. Slavery in the new state also complicated the issue. Ironically, a "slave state"—West Virginia contained 10,000 slaves—entered the Union at the same time as the Emancipation Proclamation abolished slavery in the Confederacy.⁵⁰

In any case, West Virginia proved to be valuable as a border state in the war. Now, all B&O lines that ran through the northern region of the Confederate state of Virginia, from Harpers Ferry to Wheeling and Parkersburg, traversed Union territory in the new Union state of West Virginia. Pockets of Confederate rebellion occasionally surfaced in the state, and Garrett reported to the board in November 1863 that guerrilla rebels continued to place bombs along B&O tracks.⁵¹ The West Virginia legislature commissioned an artist to design a state seal, which featured a depiction of the Tray Run Viaduct near Rowlesburg, one of the most famous bridges

the B&O ever built. The image represented the important relationship between the B&O and the creation of West Virginia.⁵²

The Work of the Very Devil Himself

While such victories no doubt gratified Garrett, he still had to keep a moneymaking railroad running and, increasingly to his dismay, to hold a family with torn loyalties together. It must have seemed like he was fighting battles on all fronts: military, commercial, and personal. The B&O had to remain ready for the war effort, and Garrett's commercial railroad competitors proved to be as unpredictable and predatory as Lee and Jackson. Moreover, of much personal distress to him, the Confederacy started to lure another generation of Garrett men. Garrett's oldest son, Robert II, age 16, wanted to be more than a bystander in the great national drama playing out around him. Like his grandfather and father, who had traveled to the wilds of western Pennsylvania and Ohio on their own at about the same age, Robert II did not relish sitting idly by. His father was now "in the thick of the struggle," as his sister Mary had written, and notable public figures in the war came and went regularly at the Garrett home.

In its first years, until it disintegrated into a merciless bloodbath, the war seemed daring and romantic to many young men. Mount Vernon Place, with its nearby secessionist hotspots, began to seduce Robert II, bored with the classroom and the mundane company of his brothers and little sister. Uncle Henry's outspoken rebellion against the Union might have been a tantalizing temptation as well for Robert. Or could it have been the image of his father's nemesis, the legendary Robert E. Lee, that began to entice the young Garrett? Perhaps for Robert II, General Lee, handsome and white-haired—his locks reportedly had turned from dark brown to white within the first year of the war—nobly sitting astride his mount, Traveller, commanding his troops and wreaking havoc on John Garrett's B&O, represented the ideal manhood.

And then there was the dashing and fearless Captain Harry Gilmor, scion of a noble Maryland name and raised in baronial grandeur at Glen Ellen, his family's castlelike house north of Baltimore. Gilmor, 23 years old at the start of the war, sided with the Confederates and in no time catapulted to hero status for his daring deeds and swashbuckling chivalry, reminiscent of the romantic tales of Sir Walter Scott. He charmed the ladies and more than likely seduced bored, aristocratic young men like Robert II to take up arms and fight for the glorious cause of the Confederacy.

Many young men experienced similar stirrings of rebellion. Beginning in the 1830s, writers and intellectuals in the Northeast felt that it was time to toughen

the upper classes, who had grown soft from easy living. With the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 now distant memories for most Americans, their fighting spirit had diminished. The emphasis on humanitarianism in the antebellum years, writers claimed, undermined masculinity and the warrior instinct; the time had come to put upper-class boys to the test. Orators like Oliver Wendell Holmes encouraged military combat to strengthen the character of an overly genteel, blue-blooded society, what he called America's "chryso-aristocracy."⁵³ Southern writers joined the campaign, and soon male colleges, such as the Citadel and the Virginia Military Institute, were founded to prepare young elite Southern boys for a rigorous life of combat and leadership. Facing a future of following their fathers' boring, upper-class professions, many young, would-be warriors agreed with this alternative mindset; one wrote that "going to war was a release from the anxiety of being unable to enter any of the more acceptable professions."⁵⁴

Newspapers carried headlines about the latest battles, childhood friends and neighbors marched off to war, and, for Robert II, the siren call of war proved to be too alluring—so he answered it. In 1863, he ran away from home, slipping past his father's watchful eye and the Union troops surrounding Baltimore, and joined up with the Confederates. This must have terrified John and Rachel Garrett, for Lee's aggressive, almost suicidal attacks were well known. The chances of a Confederate soldier dying or being wounded in 1863 were 50 percent; for a Union soldier, 29 percent.⁵⁵ Mary recalled "that dreadful night" when her brother simply "disappeared." John Garrett, that great bear of a man, always unwavering and powerful in the public eye, broke down and cried "uncontrollably." The man who steadfastly worked to preserve the Union could no longer preserve his family. For two years, Garrett's railroad had helped transport thousands of troops, many to their certain death. And now his son possibly faced the same fate. Mary remembered that in the Garrett household, "there was anxiety for all."⁵⁶

Although the date of Robert's escape to the Confederates is unclear, more than likely he ran away when Lee mounted his second invasion across the Potomac River. Joining up with Lee at any time in 1863 would have been treacherous for a soldier—and especially fearsome for his family. Overly confident after the Battle of Chancellorsville, Lee continued his march northward, again crossing the Potomac and heading toward the pastoral hills of central Pennsylvania, to the quiet college town of Gettysburg. The graycoats' forward advance cut a swath 160 miles wide, including patrols and raiding parties, and stretched from thirty miles west of Baltimore to ten miles west of Cumberland. Jackson, who had died at Chancellorsville, had amply demonstrated the importance of inflicting damage on the B&O, and on June 17, the Confederates demolished every critical bridge and shut down the line between Harpers Ferry and Martinsburg, Virginia, again leaving their signature of twisted

rails wrapped around trees and poles. After three near-annihilations of the B&O at its most critical juncture—between Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry—in the first two years of the war, Garrett had written to McClellan about the Confederates' "determined vandalic disposition of Confederate troops."⁵⁷ After emergency repairs, workers put the B&O back in business by August 11.

As Lee's Army of Northern Virginia marched north and east, Haupt ordered the B&O, the Northern Central, and the Western Maryland railroad lines to support the Gettysburg Campaign. The Army of the Potomac left its railhead at Aquia Creek (near Stafford, Virginia) and marched north, to place itself between the enemy and Washington, DC. Haupt deployed all four rail lines along the way to keep up with the army's movements.⁵⁸ As the 165,000 troops from the North and the South converged on Gettysburg on July 1, Garrett worked feverishly with other railroad presidents to coordinate Union troop and supply movements, particularly with the Northern Central Railway and the Adams Express, a wagon-transport company often used to supplement train movements. With the combat in Gettysburg intensifying by the hour, Garrett, top B&O officials, Stanton, and military officers increased their volley of telegrams to execute intricate rail shipments.⁵⁹

For the first time in the two-year war, B&O cars and crew were not totally defenseless. A young first lieutenant, John Rodgers Meigs, who graduated first in his 1863 West Point class and was the son of Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs, designed a fleet of armored artillery cars: five monitor cars and five rifle cars. Impressed with the idea, Garrett ordered 300 workers to report immediately to the Mount Clare Shops to construct the fortified iron cars. Borrowing from the US Navy's similar design for ironclads, the armored rolling artillery cars proved to be valuable in a surprise attack on Lee's retreat from Gettysburg.⁶⁰ The younger Meigs received much credit for his ingenuity, quickly rose through the ranks, and was promoted to captain.⁶¹

At the end of the three-day battle, 51,000 men, nearly one-third of the troops—of which 28,000 were Confederates and 23,000 Union soldiers—lay dead or wounded on the field. Lee had finally met his match with General George Meade, appropriately called the "old snapping turtle," who, despite Lee's desperate assaults, held the Union position at Gettysburg. The carnage "was the work of the very devil himself," a Union bugler recalled.⁶² After the final day's battle, C. R. Greenleaf, assistant surgeon for the US Army, cabled William Prescott Smith to "arrange to transport 2,000 patients from Gettysburg to Camp Parole," near Annapolis, Maryland; the hospital had been established the year before to treat Union soldiers released from Confederate prisons.⁶³

By July 22, two-and-a-half weeks after the end of the battle on July 3, 15,000 wounded troops had been transferred from the field hospital at Gettysburg to Baltimore, York, Harrisburg, and Philadelphia. The sheer magnitude of injured soldiers

was so great that additional US Army hospitals had to be opened in Baltimore. The number of prisoners of war sent to Baltimore's Fort McHenry from Gettysburg was similarly so overwhelming that the Union opened another POW camp at Point Lookout in southern Maryland; by the end of the war it became the largest POW camp, North or South.⁶⁴

As Lee began his retreat from Gettysburg on July 9, Henry Halleck, general-in-chief of the Union Army, grew worried about a logjam of unloaded cars in Frederick. Garrett assured Halleck, "We are doing everything possible and our capacity is abundant for more than all you require." Garrett also expressed concern for his overworked crews, who had moved train after train of relief troops and supplies since the beginning of the Gettysburg Campaign a week earlier: "Our men are laboring most faithfully altho' many are greatly exhausted." B&O enginemen and firemen, Garrett explained to Halleck, "have been kept without sleep for 75 to 90 hours," adding that "some rest must be had or sleep on duty and accidents will follow."⁶⁵ Lee's retreat marked a turning point. In the weeks following the Battle of Gettysburg, Lee's troops destroyed only seven miles of B&O track, but they exacted a toll by burning every critical bridge between Cumberland and Harpers Ferry before crossing back into Virginia.⁶⁶

For all John and Rachel Garrett knew, their son might be among among Lee's troops. Garrett sent his men to track down Robert II, and they soon brought the treasonous son home to face his father. Mary referred to this time as the "unhappy days of Robert's dissipation." In short order, Garrett sent Robert, along with 14-year-old Harry, safely to the North, to the College of New Jersey in Princeton (later renamed Princeton University), out of harm's—and temptation's—way. Living north of the Mason-Dixon line did little to diminish Robert's Confederate enthusiasm. Much like Henry Garrett, he remained loyal to the Confederate States' dream of independence. Writing home to his uncle, Robert enthused that one of his tutors at Princeton "is a first-rate secesh—I am very glad of it."⁶⁷

The end of the Gettysburg Campaign brought sadness to the Garretts. Rachel Garrett's brother had died during the battle, fighting for the Confederacy. The war—and most likely his family's divided loyalties—also took a visible toll on John Garrett. An observer noted that he could often be seen walking arm and arm with his friend Salmon Chase, the secretary of the treasury, through the halls of the Treasury Department: "Mr. Garrett was still a young man, [but] his face had a tired, worried look, showing that he felt the awful strain caused by the great task upon him. These two great figures of the history of the war walked slowly down the steps of the Treasury, and crossed over to the White House."⁶⁸

There was no rest in sight, either for B&O workers or for Garrett. After Gettysburg, Stanton would require even more from the B&O. "You will please devote all

your energies and resources to military movement at the present to the exclusion of everything else," he wrote to Garrett two days after the battle. "I know what you have done and expect you to surpass yourself."⁶⁹ In the 1863 *Annual Report*, Garrett fully recognized the "extraordinary and valuable services" of his employees and awarded bonuses to, among several others, L. M. Cole, general ticket agent (\$500); C. Quincy, assistant manager of the road (\$500); John L. Wilson, master of the road (\$500); and William Prescott Smith, master of transportation (\$2,000).⁷⁰ Garrett also worried about the physical well-being of his B&O employees. In October 1863, Alexander Diffey, general supervisor of trains, who had coordinated train movements in Western Maryland during a smallpox outbreak along the route, fell ill from the disease. On October 15, Garrett wrote to Stanton: "I have ordered two experienced smallpox nurses to be sent immediately to Capt. Diffey at Mt. Airy. Please give them despatch." Stanton immediately telegraphed the reply, "I will send an experienced surgeon if needed and whatever the Dept. can do for the relief and comfort of Capt. Diffey shall be done."⁷¹ Unfortunately, Diffey died the next day.

In mid-November 1863, Lincoln left Washington, DC, for Gettysburg to dedicate the battlefield as the Soldiers' National Cemetery. With his son Tad sick, and his wife "hysterical" and descending into mental instability after the death of their son Willie in February, Lincoln, too, was ill, possibly suffering from a mild case of smallpox. Because the president now regularly traveled on the B&O, Garrett arranged three special cars for him and ordered that all commercial traffic be cleared from the tracks for the duration of the round trip. Garrett instructed William Prescott Smith to "see to it that all arrangements upon the line are as perfect as possible for the comfort, safety, and rapidity of the movement."⁷² Wreathes and a US flag decorated the locomotive and the Marine Band was on board, along with disabled Union soldiers from the Invalid Corps, who served as Lincoln's official escort.⁷³ Garrett telegraphed to Stanton that Lincoln changed trains in Hanover, Pennsylvania, where the president joked with a crowd gathered at the station. "Well, you had the rebels here last summer. Did you fight them any?" Lincoln said, referring to the Battle of Hanover, fought on June 30, 1863, just prior to the Battle of Gettysburg.⁷⁴ Lincoln then proceeded to Gettysburg, where he made his then unheralded, three-minute, 272-word speech the next day to honor those who gave "the last full measure of devotion."

Garrett, at one time suspected of Southern sympathies, had earned the trust of those at the Union's highest levels.⁷⁵ Stanton reaffirmed his faith in Garrett to General Edward Otho Cresap Ord, describing Garrett as "a gentleman of great ability possessing our entire confidence in his loyalty and disposition to aid the government."⁷⁶ The B&O had worked valiantly during the Antietam and Gettysburg Campaigns, bringing crucial supplies to the fatigued and sorely tested Union Army. And it paid the price. In ten months' time, dating from Antietam to Gettysburg, Garrett

reported that the B&O suffered \$3 million in uncompensated damage at the hands of the Confederates.⁷⁷

All told, the B&O operated at full capacity for only four and a half months in 1862 and six months and six days in 1863. After Gettysburg, the large-scale Confederate destruction of the B&O subsided. “We are now able to report positively that the crisis with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad is past,” the *New York Times* announced in early October of that year. “The Confederates have all left, moving southward and our military forces, in great strength, are following and endeavoring to intercept them.”⁷⁸ While it was true that constant Confederate attacks on the B&O might have ceased, the line’s direct involvement in the war did not. Six weeks after Gettysburg, the B&O president and his weary workers faced their greatest challenge from the war.

The Right Arm of the Federal Government

1863–1865

IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS of the war, Confederates scored brilliant and unexpected victories in the East. In the Western Theater, their campaigns proved not to be as effective. With an expansive area of land to defend, from west of the Appalachians to east of the Mississippi and down through the Deep South, Confederate troops were stretched thin and thus vulnerable to Union offensives. While natural waterways had worked to the advantage of Confederates in the East, as their troops were able to block Union soldiers fording rivers and streams, the opposite was true on the western side of the Appalachians. The location of the mid-South's three main rivers—the Mississippi (“the spine of the Confederacy”), the Cumberland, and the Tennessee—gave an edge to the Union. Early in the war, Union general Winfield Scott theorized that the best way to quickly defeat the South was by water, using amphibious forces, followed by marching cavalry, to blockade port cities and rivers. Scott devised what came to be called the Anaconda Plan, a name derived from his winding, snakelike geographical strategy to follow the Mississippi River, capturing key Confederate cities along the way. Maintaining control of the Mississippi was essential to the success of the plan.

Fortunately for Lincoln, his commanders in the Western Theater proved to be resourceful and aggressive. Finally, after two years of war, the commander-in-chief could count on competence in the top ranks of his army. Some of the great Union military names that would come to define the war headed operations in the Western Theater: Ulysses S. Grant, William Tecumseh Sherman, George Henry Thomas, and Philip Sheridan. Sherman wholeheartedly endorsed Scott's Anaconda Plan, believing that the side that controlled the three main rivers would win the war. The three-month siege of Vicksburg, the “Gibraltar of the Mississippi,” which stood sentinel on a high bluff overlooking the river, reaffirmed that strategy; it ended with all 32,000 Confederate soldiers taken prisoner on July 4, 1863. On the same day, Lee had begun his retreat from Gettysburg to Virginia.

The momentum continued on September 6, 1863, when Union general William Rosecrans's Army of the Cumberland maneuvered Confederate general Braxton Bragg's army out of Chattanooga, at the critical junction near the borders of Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. A Union occupation was imperative to oust the Confederates from their stronghold in the region and pave the way for Union troops to strike at Atlanta, the core of the Confederacy, 120 miles to the southeast of Chattanooga. Rosecrans and his troops had to hold their position.

After his defeat, Bragg called for reinforcements. The Confederate high command ordered General James Longstreet to transport two divisions of his First Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia by train for Bragg's counteroffensive against Rosecrans. Longstreet devised a 540-mile rail route that would leave Richmond and travel through Bristol and Knoxville in Tennessee and into Chattanooga, taking four days to complete. Before the troop transfer even got underway, however, Union general Burnside dashed the plan by occupying Knoxville. The Confederacy's supervisor of railroads, Captain Frederick Sims, quickly planned an alternate rail route. On September 9, 15,000 Confederate reinforcements left Orange Courthouse in Virginia in flatcars and boxcars to begin a circuitous route through North Carolina, South Carolina, and northern Georgia. By the time they reached Chickamauga in northwestern Georgia, broken-down trains and faulty equipment on the mostly dilapidated, ill-equipped Southern railroads whittled the number of relief troops down to half.¹

But Bragg's troops, along with the reinforcements, surged with an overpowering counterattack, and his 66,000 Confederates defeated Rosecrans's 58,000 Union troops in fierce fighting at the Battle of Chickamauga, twenty-five miles south of Chattanooga, during September 18–20. Rebel troops forced the Federals back to Chattanooga, where Bragg besieged the city, surrounding the starving Union troops and essentially holding them captive. Bragg camped on high ground, triumphantly keeping vigil over the trapped Union soldiers.

In Washington, DC, President Lincoln and Secretary of War Stanton fully understood the devastating consequences of a Union drawback in this critical region. With much of the Mississippi River under Union control before the Chickamauga battle, Rosecrans's defeat spelled disaster. It could result in a resurgence of Confederate strength in the Western Theater, allowing them to regain supremacy at the critical junction of southeastern Tennessee and northwestern Georgia and again seize control of the western rivers for supplies and transport. Rosecrans telegraphed Stanton, urging the secretary of war to send immediate help and stating that his troops could hold out for no longer than ten days. Union reinforcements had to be found—and at once. Time was now a greater enemy than the Confederates.

Three days after the battle, on the evening of September 23, Stanton urgently convened the War Cabinet to meet with President Lincoln, who had just returned

from a day of rest at the Soldiers Home a few miles from the White House. Lincoln, Stanton, and War Department officers assembled in Stanton's office, poring over maps, telegrams, and documents. General-in-Chief Henry Halleck thought General Ambrose Burnside's 15,000 troops, then 100 miles away in eastern Tennessee, could reach Chattanooga first. Lincoln thought Sherman's army, now near Chattanooga, could reach the besieged troops faster. Stanton disagreed on both points, arguing that Burnside's army could not undertake a major offensive and that moving them would further weaken Union efforts in the Western Theater. Sherman's priority was to repair the hobbled Memphis and Chattanooga Railroad.

Stanton instead suggested a bold plan: transporting the 25,000 troops, 3,000 horses and mules, equipment, and ammunition of the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps of the Army of the Potomac 1,200 miles by rail. Standing between the trapped troops in Chattanooga and possible reinforcements now camped outside the nation's capital in northern Virginia were seemingly insurmountable obstacles: rugged, mountainous terrain; incompatible railroad gauges between connecting lines; low water tables, preventing steamboat transfer; and few bridges. A timely transport of such magnitude would be a daring and daunting assignment, one unheard of in the annals of war and railroading. Lincoln doubted the job could be done in time to save the embattled Union troops. The soldiers holed up near Chattanooga were starving, down to quarter rations and dying.

Stanton knew the right man for the job. At 11:15 p.m., after meeting with Lincoln, Stanton hurried to the White House telegraphers' office. "Please come to Washington as quick as you can," Stanton hastily cabled his friend John Garrett, "and bring Smith," referring to the B&O's capable master of transportation, William Prescott Smith.² Garrett didn't hesitate. The next morning, he cabled Stanton with his arrival time, "I am on the 8:00 train from Baltimore and expect to be at the Department at 10:00 with our Master of Transportation, and have arranged for full information regarding engines and cars."³ It is possible that the secretary of war and Garrett had already discussed the logistics of the troop movement prior to Stanton's suggesting the idea to Lincoln. Stanton also summoned Thomas Scott, vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and Samuel Felton, president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, to attend the meeting. Garrett and Scott buried the hatchet in their well-known railroad feud long enough to organize a strategy for the complex, large-scale—and urgent—troop movement.

The military generals in command were doubtful the enormous task could be accomplished in enough time for it to matter. Joseph Hooker said it could not be done. George Meade had no idea how long it would take. Henry Halleck estimated three months. Lincoln expressed skepticism about the military's ability to quickly

move the troops even the short distance across the Potomac River, where they were bivouacked in northern Virginia, to board the trains in Washington, DC: “I will bet that if the order is given tonight the troops could not be got to Washington in five days.”⁴

Troop movements by rail had precedent—but on a far more limited scale. Tom Scott, while assistant secretary of war, had ordered a report on the viability of rail transport in war, and trains had been used for short-haul troop and supply movements since the start of the Civil War. In August 1862, in the run-up to the Second Battle of Bull Run, the B&O had transported 5,000 Union troops, horses, and artillery, loaded in 400 cars, from Parkersburg, Virginia, to Washington, DC, in forty hours, a movement that normally would have taken weeks on foot. Although Confederates defeated Union troops at the Second Battle of Bull Run, the success of troop transport by rail before the battle established credibility for such movements in the future. But it was not until a year after the Battle of Gettysburg, when the desperate situation arose at Chickamauga and Chattanooga, that the railroads fully unleashed their power. At no time in the war did railroads play a more integral role in determining a crucial military victory and prove unequivocally the superiority of Northern railroads than the battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga.⁵

After Stanton’s summons to the War Department, Garrett, Scott, and Felton worked at lightening speed. Their plan called for using a single route and seven different railroad lines that stretched from Virginia to Alabama, covering almost one-third of the continent. William Prescott Smith devised a brilliant, circuitous route. The movement would assemble in Culpeper, Virginia; travel fifty miles northeast to Washington, DC, where troops would be loaded onto B&O trains; and then travel to the Ohio River at Benwood, West Virginia, near Wheeling. They would ferry across the Ohio River to Bellaire, Ohio; continue west to Columbus and Indianapolis; turn south through Nashville, recrossing the Ohio River at Jeffersonville, Indiana; and end their trip at Bridgeport, on the Cumberland River in the northeastern corner of Alabama.

The three railroad executives each took charge of different segments. Garrett supervised the first leg, from Washington, DC, to Jeffersonville, Indiana. He called on every resource of the B&O and halted all commercial business on this railroad for the duration of the movement. He telegraphed railroad presidents along the route, outlining precisely when the convoy would reach each city and alerting all of them to have additional railcars as needed. He insisted that only the best and sturdiest locomotives and cars be used. Garrett instructed one of his top officers, Louis M. Cole, to “exercise the power placed in your hands in securing such cars to the extent required, from as many roads as may be requisite to accomplish the object,” adding

that "the necessity is imperative, and you must not fail in using any means that are required to obtain the results."⁶ Much of the rolling stock belonged to the B&O, with a small number of cars supplied by the United States Military Railroad in Virginia and other railroads. He required everyone involved to maintain secrecy concerning the logistics of the clandestine movement. In one such effort, all saloons along the route were closed, an unusual move that, in itself, must have raised suspicions that something of consequence was afoot. Even the troops were kept in the dark about their destination, inciting a flurry of rumor and speculation.

On September 25, two days after Stanton's hurried meeting, Garrett assembled the troops in an imposing 30-train, 700-car convoy. As previously agreed, each soldier carried cooked rations for five days; each corps traveled with its own artillery, with 200 rounds of ammunition per gun; and the infantry carried 40 rounds of ammunition per man.⁷ The easy part of the movement—the planning stage—had been accomplished. The difficult part lay ahead. The southern section of the route would prove to be challenging, with its old, poorly ballasted, and unevenly constructed single track. Although railroads were the epitome of power and strength in the mid-nineteenth century, many of them had great weaknesses. Wooden railroad cars were old, in constant need of repair and likely to collapse at any second. Braking systems were slow acting and unreliable—brakemen had to scramble from car to car to wrestle with the recalcitrant mechanisms.

After the initial cars pulled out of the Virginia Theater on the first day, Garrett cabled to Scott that the stealth movement had departed without incident.⁸ The procession met its first obstacle at Bellaire, Ohio, on the Ohio River. Garrett had been alerted in advance that the river was unseasonably low, so the trains could not cross by ferry, the usual means. He had anticipated the problem and found an expedient alternative. "Finding the water extremely low and still falling in the Ohio River," he wrote to Stanton, and "to prevent any possible difficulties or delays in the transfer by our steamer, I have ordered the construction of a bridge, which will be completed by the time of arrival of the first trains."⁹ Workers constructed the bridge, made of barrages (a type of dam), within two days. The troops hopped off the B&O trains, crossed the river, and climbed aboard waiting trains of the Central Ohio Railroad on the other side.

The endless procession rolled through small towns, over high rail trestles, past sidetracked commercial railcars waiting silently to resume their journeys, and through beautiful countryside most of the troops had never seen. Despite the secrecy of the mission, word of the massive movement spread as the trains approached little hamlets. Although heading toward battle and possible death, the soldiers enjoyed the enthusiastic hospitality they encountered along the way. Townsfolk came out to cheer as the convoy chugged past. One soldier wrote that the ladies of Columbus

provided “pies, cakes, and kinds of fruit, and a little smile and a kind word for each of us, which was so nice and we all appreciated it to the full extent.” An officer of the 149th New York reported that “many dainty little notes were attached to apples and thrown into the cars when the train was passing, and about every man in the regiment received one and some as many as a dozen.” Another soldier caught an encouraging note tossed to him by a bystander: “May God bless and protect you is the wish of a truly loyal girl.”¹⁰

For some, the journey turned out to be fatal. Many troops traveled on the roofs of crowded cars. As the processions wended its way through Ohio and Indiana, several men were killed when they stood up as the trains went under low overpasses or through tunnels. The total number of such deaths is not recorded, but at least eight men from General Oliver Howard’s regiment died falling off the cars.¹¹

In Indianapolis, the convoy faced an anticipated problem. A difference in gauge between the Indiana Central and the railroad to Jeffersonville, Indiana, required the soldiers to switch to other trains. When the transfer was completed, the troops traveled on to where Tom Scott picked up his leg of the 1,200-mile relay. As the procession moved forward, out of Garrett’s control and into Scott’s, Stanton became worried. He telegraphed to Garrett that he would feel more at ease if Garrett would continue to oversee the balance of the movement, stating that he wished Garrett to go to Indianapolis. Garrett declined, citing the dual need to give his workers a much needed rest and for him to tend to B&O business hastily put aside in the previous days to focus on the troop movement. He assured Stanton that he and his railway officers would keep a watchful eye on all phases of the movement until it reached its destination. “Our principal officers are on duty at all points, working with thoroughness and energy to insure the best results,” he telegraphed to Stanton, “and I shall continue to give my most earnest and careful attention until the movement is completed.”¹²

Minor, often humorous mishaps occurred along the way. General Carl Schurz, dismayed that the trains carrying his troops were not in the order he desired, tried to rearrange the massive movement so that he could be given a special train to catch up with his forward-most units. His last-minute attempts resulted in his being reprimanded by the secretary of war and threatened with relief of his command.

Not surprisingly, given the enormity of the movement, Lee, now in Virginia, grew suspicious. He advised Jefferson Davis that intelligence reports indicated “the disappearance of a large encampment” east of Culpeper Courthouse, Virginia, on September 30.¹³ But Lee doubted the reliability of this information, citing the source as “a scout in whom I have not entire confidence.”¹⁴ More reports followed, and Lee continued to disbelieve them. Consequently, one of the largest transports of troops in railroad history moved forward, hidden in plain sight and undisturbed for

1,200 miles through the heart of the Confederacy, with no Robert E. Lee in sight to bombard and disrupt the intricately planned procession.

By September 30, the first troop trains had rolled into Bridgeport, Alabama. The entire undertaking, involving nearly 25,000 troops, reached its destination within eleven and a half days. The next challenge came in the second phase, repeating the process to carry much-needed supplies: cannons, artillery, mules, and hospital equipment. Garrett loaded up 530 B&O railcars with the requisite provisions. This convoy, however, did not run as smoothly. While troops in the first movement easily transferred from train to train at each connection and gamely waded through rivers along the way, mules were not nearly as cooperative, and the bulky, cumbersome equipment required precious time to load and unload.

But, by the end of October, Ulysses S. Grant, newly appointed commander of Union forces in the West, was finally fully equipped with the reinforcements he needed; his army now numbered 61,000. On November 23, he raised the siege of Chattanooga by attacking Bragg's lines and then broke into the city. Rosecrans's holed-up, half-starved soldiers and animals finally got the food and supplies they needed. Within two days, Grant took Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge near Chattanooga, chasing Bragg's 44,000 troops back into northern Georgia; 12,000 men from both sides were killed or wounded during this effort.

The battles around Chattanooga ranked as one of the most pivotal efforts of the war. They secured the city and once again put the Union back in control of the Western Theater, particularly the critical region of eastern Tennessee. All told, after the battles of Gettysburg and then Chickamauga and Chattanooga, 1863 proved to be the turning point for the Union. By the end of the year, the Confederacy was weakening. Grant had captured Vicksburg; the South lost hope for international intervention, particularly from England and France; the social order of the Old South was imploding, as many slaves took refuge in Union-occupied regions; and Confederate fighting units experienced a high rate of dissension and desertion. "Historians like to say the Civil War was won in the West and when they do they usually mean the fall of Vicksburg in July 1863 and the fall of Atlanta in September 1864. But you could argue that the real key to the West—and thus the war—was the interlocked battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga."¹⁵

For the Union, the victory at Chattanooga opened the door for Sherman's Atlanta Campaign the following spring and his legendary March to the Sea, which cut the Confederate territory in half and marked the beginning of the end for the South's dream of independence. As Sherman had predicted of the South during the secessionist winter of 1860–1861, "at first you will make headway, but your limited resources will begin to fail, shut out from the markets of Europe as you will be, your

cause will begin to want. If your people will but stop and think, they must see in the end that you will surely fail.”¹⁶

The great troop movement of September 1863 unequivocally proved the superiority of the Northern railroads, their ability to cooperate strategically, and their efficacy in war. Garrett and his B&O workers, as well as the workers on the connecting trains, had performed heroically. B&O crews had loaded and stealthily transported 25,000 soldiers over 412 miles of B&O track. They then turned right around and achieved a similarly prodigious job in the second phase, carrying supplies. The troop movement of 1863 made railroad history, helped to shift the dynamics of the war in favor of the Union, and forever changed the technology and strategy of combat. The use of railroads on such a scale indelibly altered the nature of warfare—and the outcome of the Civil War. At a time when the use of trains in combat was not yet fully understood, the great troop movement “pulled off nothing short of a miracle.”¹⁷ The completed transport of troops and equipment had taken about three weeks, a time so far under the estimates that even Halleck, Meade, Hooker—and especially Lincoln—expressed amazement.¹⁸ It proved to be “the longest and fastest movement of such a large body of troops before the twentieth century.”¹⁹

The B&O’s involvement at Gettysburg and Chickamauga eventually abated long enough for Garrett to get back to business. From the completion of the troop movement west until July 1864, the B&O enjoyed relative peace, compared with the ceaseless bombardment of the first two years of the war. Aside from scattered attacks at Martinsburg, Virginia, and Cumberland, Maryland, that temporally disrupted traffic, the Confederacy had found other targets and, with its troop numbers dwindling, concentrated its efforts to the west.

The Battle that Saved Washington, DC

By the summer of 1864, with the war dragging on for three years, both the North and the South desperately needed a decisive victory. Lincoln’s reelection was fast approaching in the fall, and he needed to bring an end to the war. His former general, George B. McClellan, was running against him on the Democratic ticket and, for the disgraced military man whom Lincoln had dismissed after Antietam, the presidential contest against his former commander-in-chief was as personal as it was political.

In June, Grant set out to bring home the victory Lincoln needed. His target: Petersburg, Virginia, an important Confederate supply line and railroad junction twenty-four miles from the Confederate capital of Richmond. But the little town, defended by Lee’s troops, proved to be far more resilient than anticipated. Combat

soon dragged into a nine-month ordeal of trench warfare as Grant's troops dug in around Petersburg and up to Richmond to hold their position. Other Virginia towns were similarly under attack by federal forces, and Lee sent Lieutenant General Jubal Early to save Lynchburg from Union general David Hunter's assault. Early did as his commander had ordered—and more. His defeat of Union troops at Lynchburg left the Shenandoah Valley and the path to Washington, DC, wide open and undefended. Lee gave Early the option of returning to Petersburg or going north down the valley, crossing the Potomac River, and, if possible, moving toward Pennsylvania, Baltimore, or Washington, DC, before reinforcements from the Army of the Potomac arrived.

General Early crossed the Potomac into Maryland, and strategically aimed for the nation's capital. His 15,000 troops headed toward Monocacy Junction, outside of Frederick, Maryland, near the critical intersection of the Georgetown Pike, an important supply line leading into the nation's capital, the B&O tracks, and the National Road. Forty miles to the southeast of Monocacy Junction lay Washington, DC, surrounded by sixty-eight forts, batteries, and blockhouses. The nation's capital was considered to be "the most fortified city in the world at the time," but few troops manned the forts; most had been sent to reinforce Grant's army.²⁰ The undefended region around Monocacy Junction provided the key to a possible Confederate victory in Washington, DC.

A month after Gettysburg, William Prescott Smith alerted Garrett to a potential disaster in the region. "Monocacy is the Rubicon," Smith warned in 1863, referring to Julius Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon River in northern Italy, which signaled a point of no return on his triumphant march to conquer Rome in 49 BC.²¹ Monocacy Junction would be the last Confederate step before taking the nation's capital—its point of no return. Just as seizing Richmond would be a major victory for the Union, so, too, would capturing the Union's capital forever change the fortunes of the Confederacy. Little did anyone suspect in the aftermath of Gettysburg and Chattanooga that Confederates would soon cross their version of the Rubicon.

On June 29, 1864, the B&O crew at Monocacy Junction spotted Early's advancing troops. The crew notified Garrett, who feared not only renewed destruction to his railroad, but also the danger of Early's increasing proximity to the capital. Garrett quickly telegraphed Stanton and General Lew Wallace, head of the Union's VIII Corps in Baltimore. Stanton knew the danger of Early's encroachment. As William Prescott Smith had predicted the year before, taking Monocacy Junction would leave the path to Washington, DC, wide open for the Confederates.

Early's surprising and threatening move toward Monocacy Junction stirred anxiety and confusion among the Union commanders. No one knew who was in charge.

The frantic volley of telegrams among Garrett, Wallace, and Stanton on July 7 conveys the urgency of the situation—and the challenges and initial misunderstandings of attempts to hastily transport reinforcements. “I regret to cite that no troops are yet disembarked,” Garrett wrote to Stanton. “Unfortunately, orders were given by the Commanding General [Ricketts] that none should be landed till he arrived.”²² Garrett then diplomatically intervened, notifying Stanton: “Our agent at Monocacy states some difficulty with . . . General Wallace and Tyler in commanding the troops in action west of the Monocacy, in view of their departmental limits. Can you not issue such orders as will relieve this difficulty?”²³ Stanton responded to Garrett’s request with orders putting Wallace in charge. “I telegraphed the Secretary of War regarding your position in connection with departmental lines,” Garrett wrote Wallace. “To relieve you from any delicacy on this subject, he advises me [that] you have been ordered to operate without reference to departmental lines.”²⁴

Within days, Garrett reinforced the general, bringing troops from Baltimore and transporting an entire infantry division from City Point, Virginia (near Richmond), 170 miles away, by boat and train and delivering them directly to the battlefield. It was an outstanding example of the B&O’s readiness to support the war at a moment’s notice: “Perhaps never before had an intermodal move of this magnitude taken place.”²⁵ The combat in the peaceful farmland around Monocacy Junction would be short lived—only one day—and deadly, but pivotal to the denouement of the war. It gained renown as the battle that saved the nation’s capital from Confederate capture.

Despite the frantic reinforcements, the Confederates drove the vastly outnumbered Federals out of Monocacy, costing the Confederates 900 killed, lost, or wounded soldiers, and the Union, 1,300. Now holding the advantage, Early demanded \$200,000 not to destroy nearby Frederick, Maryland. The city’s government paid the ransom. Early and his troops now started their determined march south to the North’s poorly defended capital. But the Confederacy’s campaign to take Washington, DC, failed. The quick action of B&O workers, Garrett, and Union troops at Monocacy Junction stalled the Confederates’ march to Washington long enough for Union backup to be brought in to defend the city.

Reaching Fort Stevens, at the outskirts of Washington, DC, two days later, Early’s troops—spent from the battle at Monocacy Junction and exhausted by the forty-mile trek from Frederick in the summer heat—were no match for reinforcements from the Army of the Potomac flooding into the city. With the Confederates closing in, panic spread through Washington. Many people fled the capital—except the commander-in-chief. Instead of seeking safer ground, Lincoln instead chose to ride out to Fort Stevens to watch two days of skirmishes between the troops, the only sitting president except James Madison to witness a battle. With his tall, trademark

stovepipe hat rising above the fortifications, Lincoln was an easy target as he stood watching the combat. He narrowly escaped the barrage of gunfire.

Despite his loss at Monocacy Junction, Wallace praised his men: "From every point of view it was heroism."²⁶ Two soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their bravery. Defeated in his attempts to take Washington, DC, Early quietly retreated to Virginia during the night of July 12. Defiant and disappointed, he later said, "We haven't taken Washington, but we scared Abe Lincoln like Hell."²⁷ The retreat at the doorstep of the nation's capital marked the final Confederate invasion of the North. Garrett, Wallace, and courageous Union soldiers fought the battle that saved Washington, DC—and, possibly, Lincoln's reelection.²⁸

A Far Wider Change

Prior to the Battle of Monocacy, a significant event took place in Baltimore. Three years to the day after the April 19, 1861, riot in the streets of that city foretold the seriousness of the coming conflict, President Lincoln stepped off a train at 6:00 p.m. at the Camden Street station to preside over the opening of the 1864 US Sanitary Commission Fair at the Maryland Institute. Started by Union women in the early years of the war, the commission raised money to improve battlefield conditions for troops and quickly grew to encompass dozens of chapters in the North. The day shone sunny and bright, and a festive crowd of 30,000 welcomed the president. Confederate sympathizers stayed silent or did not bother to attend the president's symbolic visit to show appreciation for Maryland's support of the Union and to make amends for his "midnight ride" through Baltimore in 1861, which had deprived many Baltimore Unionists of their chance to meet the future president. Bands played and soldiers, including black volunteers from the Maryland regiment of the US Colored Troops, proudly marched. Looking out on the crowds cheering and waving handkerchiefs, Lincoln reflected on the ongoing war: "Blessings upon those men who have wrought this great change and the fair women who have sustained them."²⁹

Lincoln's speech that day held particular resonance in the city that had once been so openly divided. "The change in Baltimore," the president noted optimistically, "is only part of a far wider change."³⁰ He stayed in the city for five hours before returning to Washington, DC, that night. The next day, Garrett escorted Mrs. Lincoln and an entourage of thirty ambassadors and cabinet ministers on a tour of the fair and presented Mrs. Lincoln with "a very handsome vase of wax flowers."³¹ The most impressive guests at the fair were a group of emaciated Union soldiers, recently released from Confederate prisons.

By the time of Lincoln's visit to the Baltimore fair, change definitely was in the air, as the president had noted. The beginning of the end of the torturous war was

in sight. One year later, on April 3, 1865, Robert E. Lee fought his final battle and the Confederate States of America met its end. With supply lines cut from the South and Richmond in flames, Lee retreated farther. Six days later, resplendent in his gray dress uniform, Lee quietly walked into the McLean House in Appomattox Court-house, Virginia, to surrender to Grant. Upon greeting each other, the two commanders spoke cordially, recalling their first meeting while fighting in the Mexican War seventeen years earlier. They then sat at a small table, surrounded by officers in gray and blue, and signed the papers outlining the terms of surrender. Solemn, respectful, and unconventional in his generosity toward his vanquished opponent, Grant allowed Lee to keep his sword and his beloved mount, Traveller, and also permitted other Confederate soldiers to keep their horses. As Lee left the two-and-a-half-hour meeting and walked silently toward Traveller, Union officers stood and saluted him, as did Grant.

The catastrophic four-year war was finally over. More than 623,000 men had died from battle wounds or disease, and another half million had been wounded: one out of eleven service-aged men, the equivalent of seven million casualties in proportion to current population figures.³² No family and no community in the nation escaped the deaths and the horror of the war. On April 15, just six days after Lee's surrender, John Wilkes Booth's assassin's bullet ended Lincoln's dream to see a reunited nation. The day after, Stanton uttered what have become his famous words at Lincoln's deathbed: "He now belongs to the ages."

Stanton wrote to Garrett, requesting him to once again serve the president, this time in a far more somber fashion: to form "a committee on arrangements and transportation of the remains of the late president" and "to arrange the time-tables with respective railroad companies, and do and regulate all things for safe and appropriate transportation" of Lincoln's body to his final resting spot in Springfield, Illinois.³³ Lincoln's presidency had begun on the B&O with his fateful ride into Washington, DC, for his inauguration in March 1861, and it ended with his funeral procession on the B&O from Washington four years later. During his presidency, Lincoln had traveled from the capital nineteen times, eight times on the B&O and the rest by water.³⁴

Little could anyone have suspected at the time of the bloody riots in Baltimore in April 1861 that four years into the future, on April 19, 1865, the body of the assassinated president would be carried down Constitution Avenue in Washington, DC, in a solemn funeral cortege. After lying in state in the Capitol Rotunda, on April 21 the president's remains, along with those of his son Willie, who had died in February 1862, were placed in the hearse car of a dark-garlanded, nine-car train at the B&O's Washington, DC, station. Garrett accompanied the funeral train. Mary Todd Lincoln remained at the White House, too grief stricken to make the trip.

Garrett escorted her and 300 mourners to Springfield a month later.³⁵ At 8:00 a.m., on a drizzly, chilly day, the B&O funeral train, led by a pilot engine, slowly began its solemn journey.

The procession made the first of its twelve stops in Baltimore, where the casket, draped in "flags and funeral black," was carried to the Merchants' Exchange Building. There, "a vast number of people passed by it and gazed upon the features of the martyred president," an observer noted.³⁶ In the five hours that Lincoln's coffin rested in Baltimore, all motion in the city stopped and church bells continuously tolled. In this once-volatile city, more than 10,000 people filed past the coffin. Baltimoreans draped black bunting from their windows. The *Baltimore Sun* reported that "Baltimore's streets were completely deserted and the city bore a solemn stillness," adding that "Mr. Lincoln had no equal since the days of [George] Washington in all those traits of character which adorn the human mind."³⁷ The coffin was then put back on the funeral train, bound for its next stop: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. It then continued its circuitous 1,700-mile trip to Springfield, Illinois, retracing much of the same route Lincoln had taken as president-elect to his first inaugural in 1861.

For twenty-eight days in June and July 1865, "Mr. Lincoln's Road" performed one more important role in the war, a final "great troop movement." B&O trains and ships transported 200 tons of baggage, 27,000 mules and horses, and, most importantly, more than a quarter million soldiers, no longer headed to combat, but to happier destinations they had long ago left behind—home.³⁸

John W. Garrett had come a long way since the first months of the war, when suspicions about his loyalty swirled around him. In what would be the final weeks of the war, Stanton wrote to General Winfield Hancock, one of the great military leaders of the Battle of Gettysburg: "Mr. Garrett has on many occasions rendered services of inestimable value to the government. He has the full confidence of this Department and of the President in his ability and fidelity."³⁹

Unfinished Business

In an interview after the war, Lee explained the South's surrender and the need for reconciliation between the two regions: "To secure such a peace it was not only necessary that the South should abandon its arms, but abandon all enmity and accept the changes of the times."⁴⁰ As the turbulent years of Reconstruction and the following decades would prove, few Americans, in the North or the South, shared Lee's optimism for the nation's reunited future. Lee also stated that he was unsure of his own future path. In a grand twist of historical irony, he would soon find himself working for the man and the railroad he had once tried to destroy.

Garrett, too, joined in the effort to reunite the nation and called for a diplomatic and peaceful reunion of the North and the South. On September, 22, 1865, he presided over a banquet held in Baltimore by the International Order of Odd Fellows, a fraternal, altruistic organization founded in the United States—in Baltimore—in 1819. As chairman of the event, he gathered prominent representatives from every state in the Union—east, west, north, and south—the first such gathering since the conclusion of the war. In his speech that night, Garrett’s “voice was the earliest, as it was the boldest, in behalf of that policy of conciliation of peace,” an observer recalled.⁴¹

In the first months after the war, families of prisoners besieged Garrett with requests to help win the release of loved ones jailed for treason or other infractions relating to the war and secession. President Andrew Johnson, Secretary of War Stanton, and Union generals either asked Garrett directly or forwarded many such requests from families and from the prisoners themselves. General John Woolley, former provost marshal to General Lew Wallace, forwarded a letter from a Baltimore mother, Connie Constable, whose two young daughters were jailed after “being accused of disloyalty to the flag” while playing with neighborhood children.⁴² President Johnson—eager to reunite the nation during Reconstruction and extend amnesty to former Confederates who pledged their loyalty—sent Garrett a similar request, asking him to look into the release of “prisoners, some loyal and others lately among the rebels.”⁴³ Johnson later asked for Garrett’s advice about a man “who had fled to Mexico during the war but wants to return to the United States.”⁴⁴

But one request stood out among the others. Garrett was asked to address a delicate matter that called upon his wartime allegiance to the Union and his earlier Southern sympathies: what to do about the former president of the Confederate States of America. By 1867, Jefferson Davis languished in a damp, dank cell in Fort Monroe, Virginia. He had been arrested near Irwinville, Georgia, within a month of Lee’s surrender in April 1865. A year after Davis’s capture, a grand jury in Norfolk, Virginia, indicted him for treason, although all suspicions of his possible complicity in Lincoln’s assassination had finally been squelched.

Davis’s imprisonment soon became a political hot potato. Holding the former Confederate president in custody and indicting him for treason was one matter; trying him in a court of law—in Virginia, no less—and carrying out possible punishment, perhaps even execution, was a volatile proposition in a country still highly divided and reeling from the violent war. Hundreds of thousands of Southerners still remained devoted to their political prophet, while an equal number of Northerners held the former Confederate president in contempt. Once Davis was in its custody, the federal government did not quite know what to do with its highly visible and controversial prisoner.

During her husband's imprisonment, Varina Davis traversed the country, lobbying diligently for his release. She entreated the help of prominent men, such as newspaper publisher Horace Greeley and Baltimore attorney Reverdy Johnson, even calling on President Andrew Johnson in the White House. She cited her husband's deteriorating health and demanded better treatment for him. The War Department's official response to her campaign was to simply require perfunctory weekly medical exams of the prisoner. Unsatisfied and undeterred, Mrs. Davis next approached Garrett, who, she had learned, held some influence over her husband's official warden, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. She had met Garrett two years earlier, in Washington, DC, at the war's end, telling him that she "never *believed* in the Southern people," thinking they were "too self-indulgent" and "unwhipped of justice"—citing King Lear's attitude toward villains who conceal their misdeeds and are ultimately discovered.⁴⁵

In an interview with historian, journalist, and former Confederate soldier Thomas Scharf in 1882, Garrett recalled the details of his role in helping the federal government diplomatically extricate itself from Davis's potentially dangerous custody. Mrs. Davis, accompanied by Charles W. Russell, a prominent lawyer from Wheeling, West Virginia, and a longtime friend of Garrett's, visited Garrett in his office. "She begged me to go to Washington with her, but that I assured her was impolitic and that I would go alone and ascertain the prospect of an action, and report to her," Garrett recalled.⁴⁶ Keeping his word, Garrett traveled to the capital, where he first met with US Treasury Secretary Hugh McCulloch, informing him of his wish to see Secretary Stanton about Davis's release. "Mr. McCulloch was thunderstruck," Garrett recalled, "and said it was impossible."

Garrett pressed on, calling unannounced on his friend Stanton, who was at home, sick in bed. Barging into the secretary of war's bedroom, Garrett argued his case, citing the embarrassment—and risk—to the federal government should Davis die under its watch. "Davis' health is failing and his death in confinement at Fortress Monroe would be most unpleasant and inconvenient for the authorities of the United States," Garrett emphasized. Stanton initially displayed much "anger and excitement," Garrett stated, but finally came around to Garrett's point of view and agreed that Attorney General Henry Stansbury should proceed with Davis's release.⁴⁷ Horace Greeley and Cornelius Vanderbilt led the list of prominent signatories raising the \$100,000 bond for Davis. In 1869, the federal government discreetly returned the ex-president of the Confederate States of America to his home in Mississippi, where he died in 1889. His release averted what General Carl Schurz felt would be "the trial of the century."⁴⁸

After the Davises returned to Mississippi, Mrs. Davis continued corresponding with Garrett, writing in 1874 that she wished she could live in a more exciting place,

such as Baltimore, and watch the “race of life roll by.”⁴⁹ She always expressed gratitude to Garrett for coming to the aid of her family. After her husband’s death, Mrs. Davis completed his memoirs and became a writer in her own right, moving to New York City, where she became a columnist for Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World*.

Garrett’s role in Davis’s release did not become publicly known until Scharf’s article appeared in the *Baltimore Sun* in June 1886, two years after Garrett’s death.⁵⁰ So taken with Garrett’s action in freeing their Confederate hero, the “Ladies of Baltimore” wrote to President Grover Cleveland, asking for official, posthumous recognition for Garrett’s “kindness and personal attention to the matter.”⁵¹

Garrett attended to one other important matter. Still furious over the Confederates’ audacious raids on and destruction of the B&O’s trains, Garrett retrieved the valuable booty the Confederates had hijacked during the war, sending agents throughout the South to track down engines, cars, and whatever pirated B&O equipment they could find. In April 1865, with the hunt for Lincoln’s assassin John Wilkes Booth still underway, Garrett hired Edward Keith, for \$3.75 a day plus expenses, to scour the South for stolen B&O property. Garrett also prevailed on General McCullum of the USMRR to help in the hunt. McCullum readily agreed and ordered officers of the USMRR to identify and assist in the return of B&O property.⁵² Through the next months, Keith and the USMRR officers found an astounding amount of B&O equipment, scattered primarily in North Carolina and Virginia.

Garrett made one concession to the prowess of his Confederate enemies. He hired Captain Thomas R. Sharp, Stonewall Jackson’s man in charge of coordinating the logistics of the legendary Great Train Raid in June 1861. Not wanting Sharp’s extraordinary talent for stealthy maneuvers to go to waste, Garrett put him on the B&O payroll. At Sharp’s employment interview, Garrett told him, “A man who can steal a fifty-mile section of a railroad, not to mention a lot of rolling stock, move the plunder across the country on a dirt road, and place it in another fellow’s line ought to be pretty well up on the transportation business.”⁵³

The Overwhelming Influence of the B&O

The B&O not only survived the war, but performed heroically. At the war’s end, Lincoln commended Garrett as “the right arm of the federal government in the aid he rendered in preventing the Confederates from seizing Washington.”⁵⁴ In hindsight, Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederate States of America, believed that the South had been doomed from “the early months, after the fall of Fort Sumter, when the South was waiting for Maryland to act and Lincoln prevented that state from seceding—largely because of the overwhelming influence exerted by the Baltimore & Ohio in favor of the Washington government.”⁵⁵ As a Southern

Democrat who had thrown his support to the Union and a Republican president, Garrett and "Garrett's Road" had been invaluable to the North. From the time Stanton took office as secretary of war, he remained in almost daily contact with the B&O's president. "As [Garrett] knew almost everybody in the South, he possessed enormous resources and was fully trusted by Stanton, [so] his services were of great value."⁵⁶

Relieved that the long war was finally over, Garrett wrote of the noble efforts of B&O workers in the 1865 *Annual Report*: "The Board again acknowledge with satisfaction their appreciation of the vigor, skill, and fidelity of the officers and men in each department of the service, by which the business of the company was successfully conducted during periods of frequent danger and embarrassment."⁵⁷ John L. Wilson, master of the road, who was in charge of construction and maintenance for the B&O, noted in the same report, "The significance of this remarkable month [April] in the history of the country is worthy of note in the history of the road; bringing with it peace to the former, and as a consequence, relief from the many acts of destruction, the detentions and perilous irregularities to which the road has been constantly subjected for four years."

During those years, each B&O *Annual Report* meticulously chronicled the destruction of portions of the B&O. Starting with May 24 and 28, 1861, when telegraph lines were dismantled near Grafton, West Virginia, and the two bridge spans were destroyed at Patterson's Creek (now in West Virginia) following the April 19 riot in Baltimore, the reports continued until April 6, 1865, in the final days before Lee's surrender, when "guerillas appeared above the No. 12 [but] passenger trains ran through, strongly guarded."⁵⁸ Throughout the war, the *Annual Reports* and the minute books of B&O board meetings reflected only an impartial, objective accounting of the business of running the company. Little or no subjective commentary about the devastation of the war unfolding daily around Maryland and the nation was interjected into the written reports by the officers or, most notably, by Garrett in his president's reports.

Despite the destruction, the war financially benefited the railroads. A combination of factors contributed to their wartime profits: significantly increased war-related freight and passenger traffic, and the skyrocketing production of domestic goods from mines, farms, foundries, and forests that needed to be shipped.⁵⁹ Much of the US grain production headed straight to Europe, which was experiencing poor harvests. Troop transport also boosted revenue. At the beginning of the war, Garrett charged the government \$3.75 per mile for troop movement; then secretary of war Simon Cameron bristled at what he thought was an excessive amount.⁶⁰ But soon the railroads proved to be crucial to the war effort, and they could hardly keep up with demand. Railroad presidents learned that they no longer had to undermine

each other's companies to profit from the war; there was plenty of business to go around. The rate wars that had characterized the early decades of railroading had calmed down—at least for a while.

The B&O's bottom line reflected how the war had brought "marked increases in revenues to the road," Garrett wrote in the 1865 *Annual Report*.⁶¹ During the four years of the war, passenger revenues increased, although in 1861, thanks to Lee's and Jackson's unrelenting destruction, freight revenue dipped as traffic on the railroad was disrupted. From 1861 to 1865, revenues on the Main Stem from Baltimore to Wheeling leapfrogged each year: 1862, \$4 million; 1863, \$6.5 million; 1864, \$8.5 million, and 1865, \$10 million.⁶² Operating costs similarly increased, but overall profits still remained healthy. War, competition, and Confederate destruction aside, Garrett kept his word to his stockholders. Throughout the war, the B&O paid out hefty dividends: on the Main Stem, 6 percent in 1861–1863, 7 percent in 1864, and 8 percent in 1865; on the Washington Branch, 5 percent.⁶³ The B&O came out of the war in good financial condition.⁶⁴

John Garrett, too, emerged from the war seemingly triumphant and in robust health. Now at 45 years old, he was confident of both his efforts during the war and the respect he had garnered. A Garrett relative, William Keyser, described him as having "a fine head and expressive countenance"; he also weighed 260 pounds.⁶⁵ The *Baltimore Sun* concurred, noting, "His features were indicative of great will power and immense capacity of endurance, as his stamina during the war had proven, and his face was kindly and intelligent."⁶⁶ Garrett rode a high tide of admiration and prestige among Union victors. There was talk of erecting a colossal bronze statue in front of the B&O's Washington, DC, station "of the man who saved Washington to the Federal Union."⁶⁷ It was never built, however. More than likely, repatriated Southern congressional leaders did not share such affection for the Southern Democrat whose railroad proved to be invaluable in the North's victory.

The war had shaped the early years of Garrett's B&O presidency and, similarly, became a war of "firsts" for the nation, as Americans had faced death and destruction on a scale never before seen. Industry and war intersected as technological inventions rapidly transformed the nature of warfare. Railroads had been constantly modernized to keep up with war demands: "railroad batteries" (rolling artillery cars); revolving gun turrets; hospital cars; assembly line factories that could quickly replace damaged railroad hardware; iron boxcars, rather than wooden ones; more-efficient troop, supply, and food transfer; and sturdier bridge and trestle construction. Augmenting the railroads' combat readiness were other highly inventive creations developed during the war: hot-air observation balloons; telegraph wiretaps; submarines and iron-clads; steam-propelled warships; landmines; and repeating rifles. By the end of the war, more than 15,000 miles of telegraph wires connected the North. The war's

enormous casualty rate and battlefield emergency treatment ushered in a new era in American medicine and, to meet the unprecedented death rate, improved embalming and burial techniques.

At its December 1865 meeting, the B&O board again unanimously reelected Garrett. Former Baltimore mayor John Lee Chapman, who had publicly questioned Garrett's management in prior years, also ran for the B&O presidency, but he received only one out of the twenty-one votes.⁶⁸ Garrett, the "Aladdin of railroading," remained unchallenged—at least inside the B&O boardroom. He had finally maneuvered the composition of the B&O's board to his liking, with a safe balance of public/private directors that would ensure his future presidency—not that it mattered. Although the wrong vote could put him out of office in a heartbeat, he seldom depended on the board for advice. "In no single instance did Mr. Garrett give their opinions a moment's consideration when they differed from his own," Keyser observed.⁶⁹

Garrett got back to business, expanding routes and keeping his stockholders happy, all the while trying to outdo his competitors, particularly the Pennsylvania Railroad. At war's end, he vowed "to make every possible resource available to the advancement and efficiency of the road."⁷⁰ He eagerly dove into new or abandoned entrepreneurial projects that he had envisioned prior to the war. "The Civil War had shown Baltimore that it now possessed—after nearly forty years of effort—an agency which should be truly effective in maintaining its parity, if not its supremacy, as an entrepôt in the still rapidly growing traffic into and out of the hinterland," an early historian of the B&O wrote.⁷¹ But maintaining that supremacy would prove to be challenging. The prewar frenzy of growth and competition offered but a preview of what would follow after 1865. Garrett would spend the remainder of his life relentlessly trying to beat or at least keep up with his old rivals—and new ones kept popping up like jack-in-the-box toys. After 1865, railroad competition would become more aggressive and relentless than ever. Garrett simply moved from one form of combat to the next.

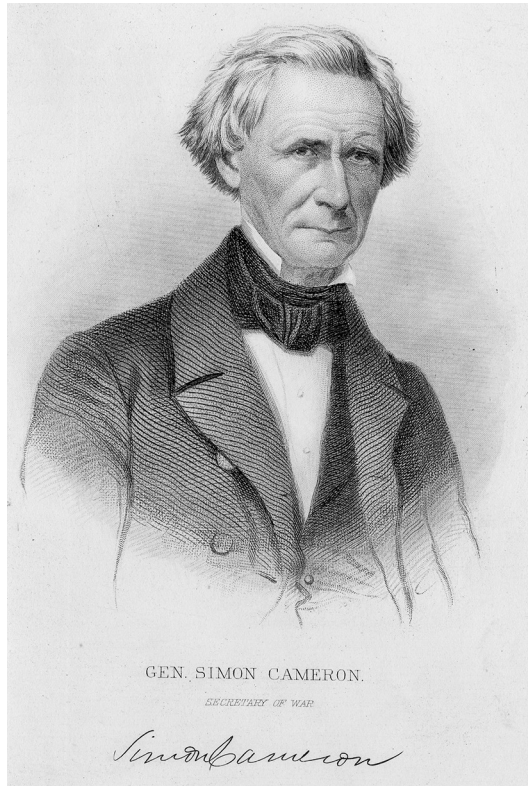


Figure 10. President Lincoln appointed Simon Cameron, a powerful senator, Washington insider, and advocate of the B&O's primary rival, the Pennsylvania Railroad, as the first secretary of war. Garrett felt that Cameron provided little assistance during the Confederates' many attacks on the B&O and, after the war, tried to thwart the B&O's expansion plans. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

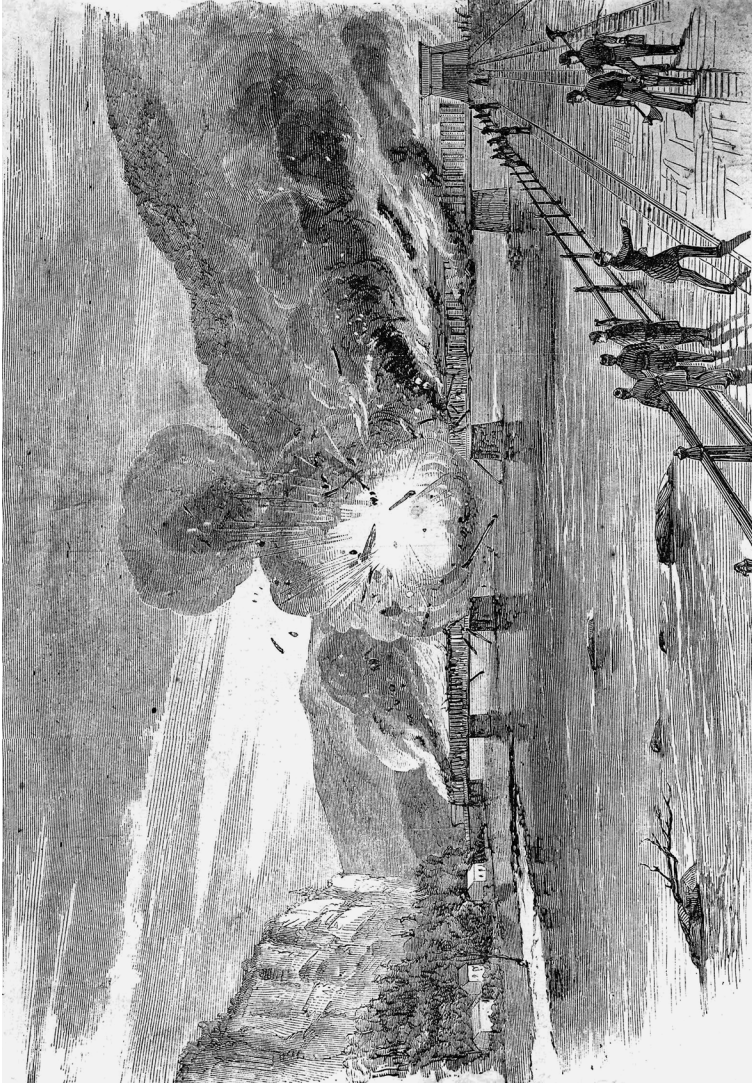


Figure 11. The B&O's vulnerable route system, running through Union Maryland and Confederate Virginia, marked it as the war's "first front" — an early target for Southern aggression. Within two months of the start of the war, Confederates destroyed the critical B&O bridge over the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry in June 1861, the first of many such attacks on the B&O. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

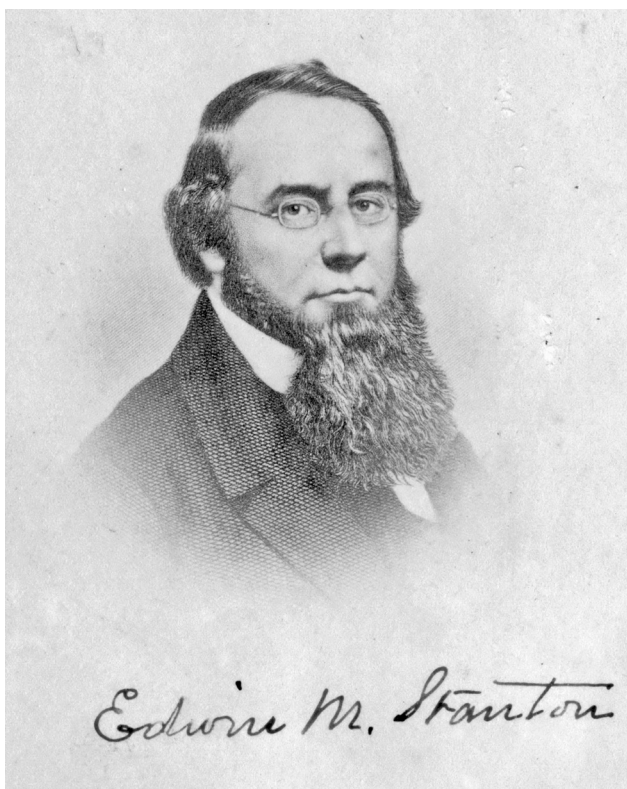


Figure 12. Much to Garrett's relief, his longtime friend Edwin M. Stanton replaced Cameron as secretary of war in 1862. Garrett and Stanton communicated daily during the war. In September 1863, Stanton worked closely with Garrett to quickly transport 25,000 men and their equipment west after General William Rosecrans's defeat at Chickamauga. The covert operation gained fame as the "great troop movement," proved the reliability of railroads in war, and helped the Union maintain a stronghold in the Western Theater. Courtesy of the Daniel Carroll Toomey Collection.

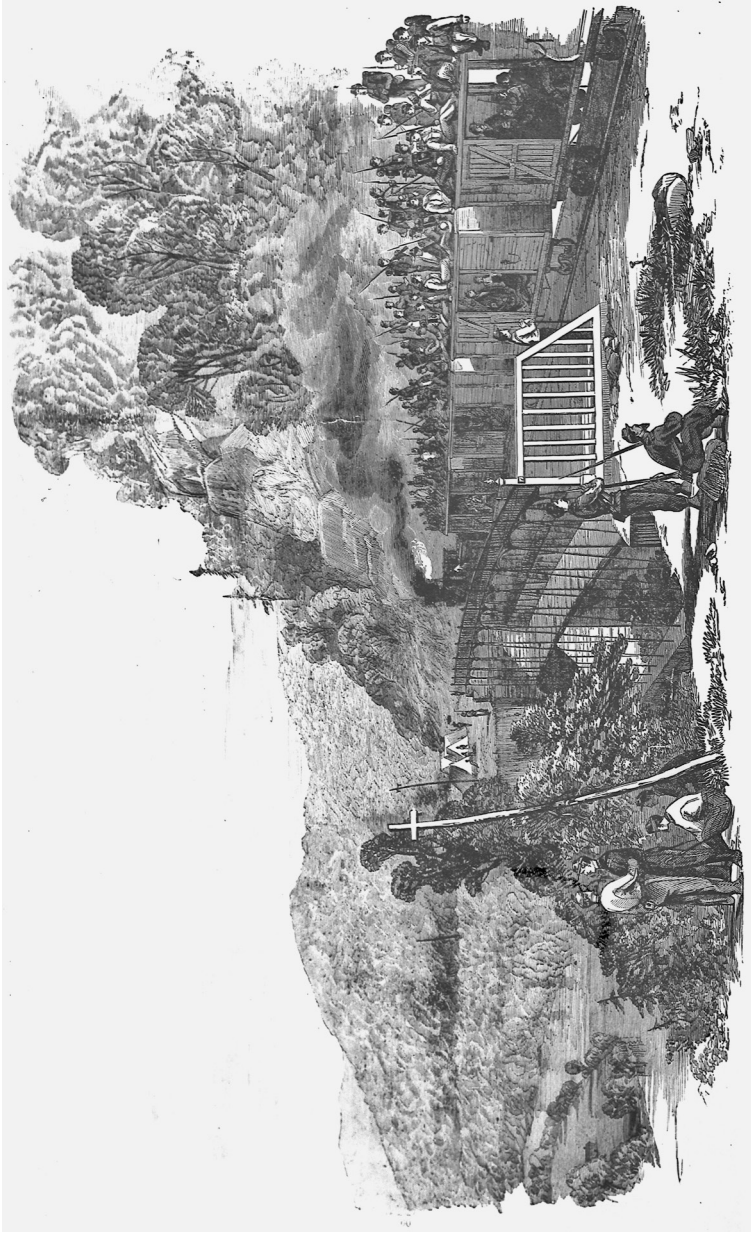


Figure 13. Early in the war Garrett, casting off suspicions of Confederate sympathies, made the B&O available for troop and supply movements to critical battles. Here, a troop train, similar to those used in the 700-car convoy of the great troop movement, crosses the Tray Run Viaduct in what is now West Virginia. President Lincoln commended the B&O as “the right arm of the federal government” for its critical role in the ultimate Union victory. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

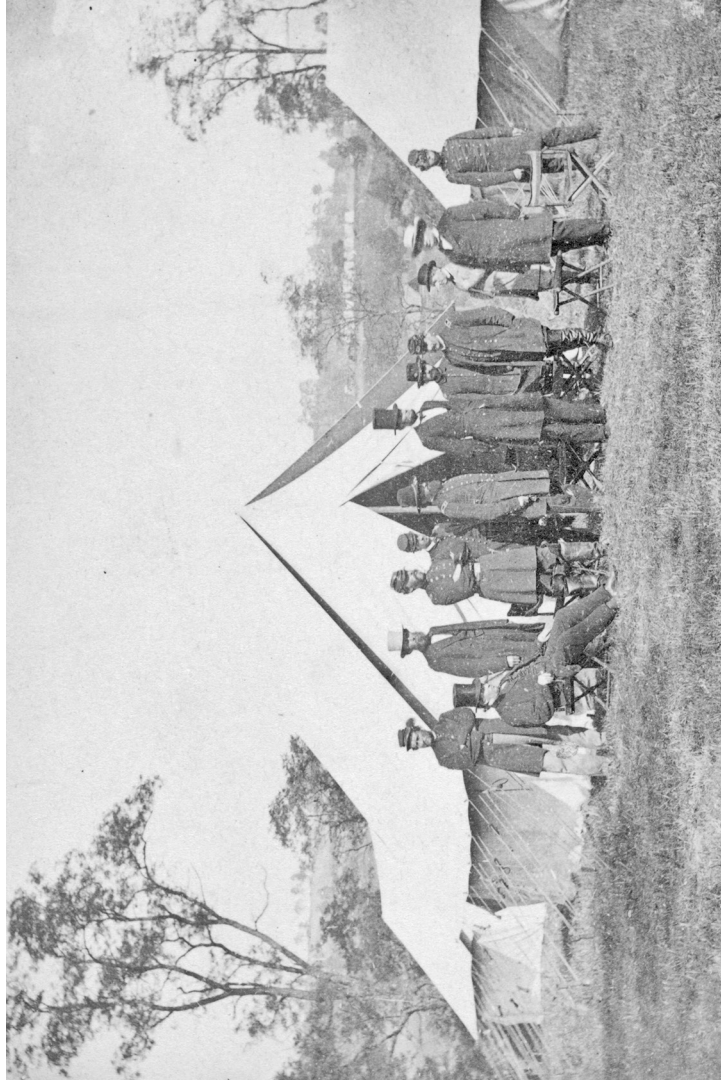


Figure 14. Shortly after the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862—the bloodiest single day of the war—President Lincoln asked Garrett to accompany him to the battlefield, where he reviewed the troops of the Army of the Potomac and met with its commander, General George McClellan, who had failed to pursue the retreat of Robert E. Lee's Confederates. After the war, Garrett (*second from right*) "reconstructed" this photograph to remove everyone from the image except himself, Lincoln, and McClellan, more than likely to enhance his public reputation as a member of Lincoln's inner circle. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

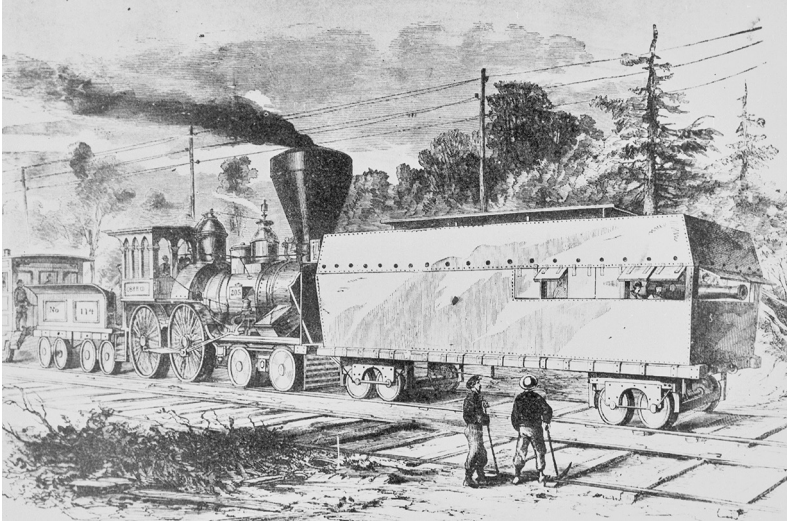


Figure 15. In 1863, for the first time in what was then two years of war, B&O cars and crews were not totally defenseless. Early in that year, Garrett ordered workers at the Mount Clare Shops to construct fortified iron cars, which had been designed by a young first lieutenant, John Rodgers Meigs, son of Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. Borrowing from the US Navy's similar design for ironclads, the armored rolling artillery cars proved invaluable in a surprise attack on Lee's retreat from Gettysburg. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

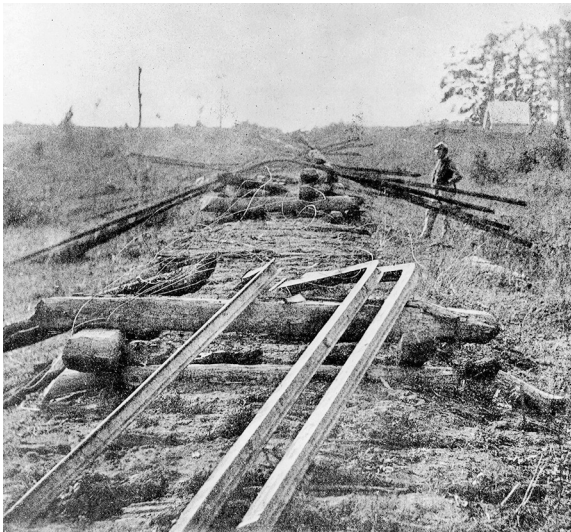


Figure 16. The Confederates attacked the B&O 143 times during the war, destroying equipment, bridges, telegraph lines, and miles of tracks. With his crews working night and day, Garrett quickly had the damage repaired and made sure that the B&O's important supply lines stayed open. Scenes like this one, with destroyed tracks lying amid a tangle of downed telegraph wires, represented the all-too-familiar calling card of the Army of Northern Virginia as it laid waste to the entire rail network in southern Pennsylvania during the Gettysburg Campaign. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 17. Although the western counties of Virginia became the Union state of West Virginia in 1863, Confederate attacks on the B&O continued in the new state. Here, a burned B&O passenger train is left immobilized near Kearneysville, West Virginia, on October 14, 1864. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 18. At the end of the war, John Garrett emerged seemingly strong and healthy. In the years ahead, he would face even greater challenges to keep the B&O running. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

Part Three

EMPIRE BUILDING AND COLLAPSE

1866-1915

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A New World Order

1866–1871

AFTER THE WAR, Garrett spoke optimistically of his hopes for the reunited Union and his sadness at the tragedy of lives lost and the devastation of the nation. He had experienced loss on many levels: Rachel's brother killed at Gettysburg; his own brother and son publicly sympathizing with the enemy; the enormous destruction to the B&O, and the political fracturing of his beloved hometown. In 1868, he presided over a banquet attended by 300 prominent citizens and held in honor of Reverdy Johnson, newly appointed minister to England, former US senator from Maryland, and former attorney general of the United States. Citing from Romans 13:12 in the scriptures, Garrett expressed hope that "the night is far passed; the day is at hand. I am convinced that a better condition of things is upon us."¹

The "night" of the war may have passed, but Garrett and his railroad had much catching up to do to reach a "better condition." In the first years after the Civil War, many railroad companies, the B&O included, grew larger, more complex, and highly predatory. Railroad mileage exploded after 1865, from 35,000 miles of track to 53,000 by 1870, and to 93,000 by 1880.² This dramatic increase would make the next chapters of Garrett's B&O presidency as difficult, if not more so, than the first. Railroads now dominated as the most efficient, most expedient way to move people and goods overland, in all seasons and in almost all forms of weather—as the great troop movement of 1863 had dramatically demonstrated.

Garrett quickly made up for lost time. Other railroads that had not been as directly involved with the war or faced the massive Confederate destruction the B&O did had moved well ahead during the war years, improving equipment and capturing up-and-coming markets. Garrett set about repairing damaged equipment, updating the road and the rolling stock, and, perhaps most importantly, double tracking the Main Stem from Baltimore to Cumberland to increase capacity and efficiency to and from the all-important coal regions. During the war, repairs on the rail lines had been done quickly, often resulting in rickety wooden trestles. Garrett knew sturdier

construction would “take time for this accomplishment,” as he explained to the Pennsylvania Railroad’s Thomson.³ To compensate his freight customers for sometimes-irregular service, Garrett resorted to cutting rates, a move that did not sit well with Thomson. Garrett reminded Thomson that B&O service “was liable to considerable irregularities” in the aftermath of the war and needed “special considerations.” He also modernized the Baltimore–Washington, DC, line, which had seen much action in the early years of the war.

Having been in office for eight years by 1866, Garrett now ranked as one of the most seasoned and tenured of the railroad presidents. Much as in his first years as head of the B&O, Garrett, again the “dyspeptic general,” continued his micro-management methods, reading every memorandum, report, invoice, and letter that crossed his desk. A four-month period, from May through September 1866, shows his frenetic pace, during which he wrote hundreds of letters responding to inquiries both major and trite: personal invitations, work orders, operational directives to B&O managers, and requests for letters of introduction.⁴ In one case, he wrote to Brigham Young on behalf of the son of a friend, visiting from England, who wanted to meet the Mormon leader.⁵ Garrett fired off dozens of letters and cables a day, from buying expensive accouterments for passenger cars and checking on road upgrades to responding personally to customer complaints, and, not least, making plans for more expansion. He also made investments for the company. He contacted New York broker C. M. Lampear, asking him to purchase \$30,000 in gold for the B&O “at such a time as you may deem best for the purchase.” Three months later, the investment had not gone as planned, and Garrett reported to the broker that “gold has gone badly for us.”⁶

He continued to carefully review daily accident reports. In one, he read of a near miss at the Long Run station, where a railroad bar was found lying across the track. Writing to the B&O’s master of transportation, Garrett demanded that the full force of the law be brought down on the culprit: “Have you taken pains to ascertain who was the villain guilty of the outrage? Every effort should be made in all such cases to reach the guilty party and to have the seriousness of such outrages effectively understood.”⁷ He sent a railroad pass to President Ulysses S. Grant and his family for unlimited travel on the B&O.⁸ Having worked closely together during the war, Garrett and Grant continued their friendship in the following years. Grant presented Garrett with a Haviland porcelain dinner service, delicately decorated with a thin pink border and an eagle, shield, and crown of roses, reflective of the popular decorative arts style of the postwar years.⁹

Presidents might have gotten free passes, but, continuing his obsession from the prewar years, freeloaders on B&O cars—or on cowcatchers, as sometimes occurred—incensed Garrett. Few such incidents escaped his notice or condemnation. “I observe

a paragraph in the [*Railroad*] *Gazette* of yesterday stating that eight disorderly men got upon our Washington train and refused to pay fare,” Garrett wrote to the B&O’s master of transportation. “Such parties must be arrested promptly and the severest penalty of the law enforced upon them.”¹⁰ Sounding like the brash young partner at RG&S who, twenty years earlier, defended a shipment of tainted cheese, in 1869 Garrett chastised a B&O freight customer: “I am surprised to learn that you should have any occasion whatsoever to judge that any goods shipped by your house by our line should be improperly detained.”¹¹

Questionable and perceived profligate expenditures in his domain most infuriated him. Concerned over a \$6,565.21 increase over the previous year in the payroll of the Central Ohio division, Garrett instructed the division’s president “to analyze this roll thoroughly. With the small amount of relative revenues, there must have been extravagant and unnecessary expenditures upon that line. Call the special attention of each officer in charge to the necessity of more economical administration.”¹²

Garrett continued to depend on the sound counsel and financial advice of his brother, who had been his closest ally and confidante since childhood. But Henry Garrett’s health rapidly declined after the war. Despite his outward flamboyance, portly build, and energetic anti-Union activities, Henry had been plagued with health problems for a decade, most likely asthma or hay fever. He never gave up hope that the South would rise again. “The Gulf states are coming back,” he wrote optimistically in 1867, “and there is a remote chance [of the Confederacy’s resurrection].”¹³ Jefferson Davis’s failed presidency and the Confederacy’s downfall demoralized Henry, exacerbating his already fragile health. “I am a poor sick old soldier in poor old Maryland, having little left but a good name,” he wrote to a friend.¹⁴ Complaining of his “earthly Tabernacle,” he wrote to his mother that “it is my misfortune to suffer almost constantly with painful fever of the head, sneezing, and closing of the nostrils.”¹⁵ Elizabeth Garrett constantly worried about her older son. After one of Henry’s recurring medical problems, Elizabeth wrote to John, asking him to not let Henry travel or return to work “until he is fit for duty.”¹⁶ On a trip to Syracuse, New York, in 1866, a train accident had left him with an injured arm that would not heal. “I am a crabbed invalid,” Henry lamented.¹⁷

After the war, Henry found other occupations besides egging on the Confederacy. He became a patron of the arts and, as head of RG&S, continued to rank as one of Baltimore’s leading financiers. He continued his father’s Presbyterian passions as a steadfast congregant and benefactor of the family’s Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church. He gave generously to restore the building, buying a new organ from a dealer in New York and augmenting the pastor’s salary. He also spent much time recuperating from his maladies at his idyllically named farms, “Milk and Honey” and “Kindness,” in the Glades region of the Western Maryland mountains. He took

a special interest in the local Presbyterian church there and enjoyed “addressing the Sabbath School teachers and children of the church.” But he held little hope for the piety of the preachers. “The church population is quite orderly now, but they find little interest in their church services because the ministers preach the people out with political harangues,” he complained.¹⁸

As Henry’s health declined, John’s concern for his brother increased. Writing from Saratoga Springs, New York, in August 1867, John brought Henry up to date on the family. “Mother, sister, and I are particularly well,” he wrote, but inquired, “How is your health?”¹⁹ Two months later, Henry died. In the weeks prior to his death, Henry had retreated to the mountains to recover from hay fever. He returned to Baltimore, where he died of typhoid fever, on October 10, at age 50. Hundreds of letters of condolences poured in.²⁰ Friends and business associates who crowded into his Monument Street house for the funeral remembered him fondly. “In his character of merchant he was regarded as accurate and upright, and while a businessman yet, more or less, displayed taste for scholarly and art matters,” the Reverend John Leyburn eulogized. “He possessed a benevolent and kindly nature also and was without ostentation in any benefits conferred. He had generally the respect of all classes of people to whom he was known.”²¹ Henry’s funeral service ended with his favorite Scottish hymn, “Dundee,” containing William Cowper’s poignant lyrics, “God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.”²²

John Garrett made sure his brother’s treasonous days of championing the Confederacy were soon forgotten, supplanted by a new, sanitized, benevolent image as church benefactor, respected businessman, and pillar of the community. To memorialize his brother, John Garrett built a church in the town of Oakland, in Western Maryland, in 1867. The Garrett Memorial Church featured sandstone from a quarry in nearby Rowlesburg, West Virginia. It soon gained fame as “the church of the presidents,” as Ulysses S. Grant, Benjamin Harrison, Grover Cleveland, William Howard Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt worshipped there while vacationing in the Western Maryland mountains. Although Henry had often embarrassed the family with his antics, John Garrett, the former Southern Democrat and slave owner, more than likely sympathized with and understood Henry’s allegiance to the Confederacy, or at least learned to tolerate his brother’s behavior. After Henry Garrett’s death, a friend observed of the brothers’ close relationship, “There had never occurred between them the slightest word of difference.”²³ Garrett presented Rachel and his daughter Mary with brooches containing snippets of Henry’s hair, a popular funerary memento in the Victorian era.

To fill the void after Henry’s death, Garrett brought his heirs apparent, his sons Robert II and Harry, home from Princeton. Now forgiven for their adolescent misadventures, they took their places at RG&S in 1867. Robert had struggled with his

studies while in college. Making the transition from would-be Confederate warrior with Robert E. Lee to serious Princetonian scholar proved to be difficult. Writing to Rachel Garrett—and knowing he was under the critical eye of his father—in 1865 Robert asked his mother to “please tell Pa that I have not missed any recitations or other exercises yet and moreover do not intend to.”²⁴ The family continued to be concerned about his studies. Robert wrote to his “Dear Uncle” [Henry], saying, “I am as anxious as yourself about my studies as this is my last year and you know we graduate in the spring.” Suffering from an undisclosed illness, Robert added that he wanted to “study at home until able to return [to school]—the Dr. thinks I can return about the middle of next month. I feel able to go on now.”²⁵ Despite his academic problems, Robert II graduated with honors from Princeton on schedule, at age 20, in 1867; Harry, 18, was just shy of graduating.²⁶

Both sons were the same ages as their father and Uncle Henry had been when they had joined RG&S in 1839 to help the family firm ride out the lingering Panic of 1837. Like John and Henry Garrett a generation earlier, Robert II and Harry had little choice in their career paths. Their domineering father already had dictated their futures. Robert and Harry, along with four clerks, handled the day-to-day business of domestic banking, foreign exchange, and buying and selling railroad and state securities, as their father and uncle had done years earlier.²⁷ As in the prewar days when John and Henry headed the family firm, Robert and Harry branched out into a range of entrepreneurial adventures—always under the watchful eye of their father.

A Changed Management Style

John Garrett, the autocratic micromanager, who singlehandedly had presided over his B&O empire for eight years, soon came to realize he could no longer direct the increasing complexity of the B&O or the intensifying competition by himself. He had to alter his management style. In 1866, he created a new B&O position of vice president. Other railroad presidents had recognized this need and appointed vice presidents years earlier, strengthening power at the top and sharing the executive duties of their complex corporations. The Pennsylvania Railroad’s Thomson-Scott combination provided a model of such corporate dynamism. But Garrett had been slow to acknowledge the importance of adding another top executive—or even hinting at relinquishing his closely held responsibilities.

In his choice to fill the vice presidency, Garrett did not look beyond family ties. He promoted 34-year-old John King Jr., a Garrett cousin from the Stouffer side of the family and a career B&O employee. King’s particular expertise lay in financial and accounting matters. Starting as a ticket agent in a Baltimore suburb, he had

risen rapidly to the positions of paymaster, then auditor (i.e., chief accounting officer), and then general freight agent, where, among other duties, he took charge of freight rates and interrailroad revenue divisions. In 1871, the B&O board elected King as a director. Over time, the capable King became Garrett's alter ego, filling in during his boss's absences and taking care of the day-to-day minutia of administrative details, while Garrett tended to the bigger picture of handling company policy.

Five years later, in 1871, Garrett decided that he needed an additional vice presidency. General George McClellan was job hunting after his failed 1864 presidential bid against Lincoln, but Garrett did not hire his longtime friend. Instead, he chose another relative, William Keyser, as second vice president, evidently fearful of allowing anyone except trusted family members to enter top B&O management. Keyser, a Baltimore Renaissance man, had held several career positions, particularly in the iron and copper industries. Before the war, Maryland's governor appointed him to the B&O board to represent the state's interests, and Keyser subsequently served on the finance committee with Johns Hopkins; he also served as a director of the Western Maryland Railroad.

Years earlier, Keyser had enticed Garrett to invest in two companies for which Keyser served as a director: Baltimore's Abbott Iron Company, and the Baltimore Copper Company. The investment in the copper firm turned out to be a near disaster from which Garrett narrowly escaped—and which he never forgot. Yet Keyser had valuable political connections in the Maryland General Assembly, and at the B&O, Garrett assigned him to oversee the machinery and road departments. While King had worked with Garrett for years and had grown accustomed to his micro-management, Keyser found doing the bidding of his demanding boss difficult at first. Keyser would have to become used to presidential intrusions into seemingly insignificant incidents, such as Garrett's stern chastisement of him about "several parties on the Connellsville line who had not paid fares."²⁸ Keyser complained of working in what he described as the "dreary, barn-like offices" at Camden Station—built with such pride just years earlier, "and so unlike other more modern railroad offices of the day."²⁹ He considered them "very small, in fact altogether too small [for] a staff for so large and growing a corporation."

Yet working for Garrett had its perks, as Keyser soon discovered. He had full use of Garrett's palatial private railroad car, the "Maryland"—the one that Lincoln had so loved to ride in. The massive car had been built at the Mount Clare Shops and, as Keyser observed, contained "every convenience, coupled with an air of pretentiousness and elegance. The ceiling was a series of oil paintings of gay and festive scenes, executed by a Mount Clare artist who, I was told, became so enamored of his work that his mind gave way, inducing him to rashly end his artistic career, with its chances

of fame, by suicide.”³⁰ Another guest described the car’s huge entrance hall, a bedroom, a sitting room “with sofas covered with beautiful Brussels carpet (small pattern) quilted like a mattress [and] with green buttoned chairs covered with corded wool. Bedroom berths much higher and wider than in a ship, Venetian blinds, looking glasses, twenty-two windows, lamps that would be lit if in a dark tunnel, a writing table, and 3 or 4 daily newspapers.”³¹

Garrett’s private car typified the opulence in which railroad presidents traveled. “The President of nearly every road of consequence in the country has a car of his own,” the *New York Times* reported.³² In 1867, George Pullman opened the Pullman Palace Car Company to give first-class passengers all the luxuries of home. In 1870, the *New York Sun* described the opulent cars for first-class passengers: bright and gorgeous, glittering with a groundwork of brown metallic paint and ornamented with gold stripes and letters. Each car had “six wheels at the end of each coach and a variety of springs” to ensure that passengers would comfortably float along in their journey.³³

But railroad men did not travel like mere mortals. They took the palace car idea a few steps further. None came even close to the grandeur of the Vanderbilt palace car: “the largest in the country, 74 feet in length, 9 feet 10 inches wide, and 14 feet 6 inches high. It is divided into four main apartments,” including a kitchen, a state-room with murals, a sitting and dining room, and an observatory at the rear. It cost \$20,000. “The Queen of England does not ride in such magnificence as the railroad magnates of America” the *New York Times* opined.³⁴

Industry magnates, however, needed more than palace cars in order to display their power and status. The qualities of foresight, strategic vision, forcefulness, and the ability to find financial resources became essential for industry leadership. Garrett now found himself facing the most powerful, aggressive, dazzling and, often, unscrupulous, personalities of the nineteenth century.

The Great Lords

As the railroading world around Garrett rapidly exploded in growth and dominance, he was plunged into a wholly different competitive environment from the prewar years. His performance during the war had been outstanding, but it mattered little in the type of commercial warfare that followed, for he now was counted among the ranks of the elite and often-ominous Gilded Age tycoons. The word “tycoon”—Japanese for “great lord”—first appeared in popular usage when Lincoln’s aides jokingly used it to describe the president. The descriptor quickly came to apply more appropriately to the “great lords” of industry and finance. In the postwar

years, Garrett would do battle with, but also befriend, many such giants: Andrew Carnegie, Cornelius Vanderbilt, James Fisk, Daniel Drew, Jay Cooke, J. Edgar Thomson, Thomas Scott, and Jay Gould, among others.

Garrett's prewar nemesis, the Pennsylvania Railroad's J. Edgar Thomson, teamed with the prodigious talents of his first vice president and heir apparent, Tom Scott. The two of them continued—in fact, stepped up—their menacing competition with the B&O. Unlike the B&O, the Pennsylvania had not suffered significant damage during the war, and its accumulated profits gave Thomson and Scott a financial edge over Garrett. The well-managed Pennsylvania Railroad held a valuable trump card. In the early months of the war, Scott, while serving as assistant secretary of war, headed a reconnaissance mission to gather information about the strengths and weaknesses of Northern railroads. This information became invaluable as the Pennsylvania developed its postwar expansion strategy.

Garrett did not trust Scott any more than he did Thomson. He felt that Scott operated the Pennsylvania with a sleight-of-hand approach.³⁵ Nonetheless, Thomson and Scott got off to a fast start in the postwar years and kept up their earlier pace of acquisition and control. Within eight years after the war, the Thomson-Scott duo transformed the Pennsylvania Railroad from a 491-mile line of no particular distinction to a system of nearly six thousand miles, accounting for over 8 percent of all US rail mileage and 10.5 percent of all capital invested in railroads at the time.³⁶ By the mid-1870s, the Pennsylvania possessed more miles of track, carried more tons of freight, reflected a larger concentration of investment capital, and generated more revenue than any other railroad in the United States.³⁷ The Pennsylvania Railroad, once confined mostly to its home state, grew to become a true corporate behemoth: the biggest railroad empire—and the largest privately owned corporation—in the world.³⁸

Scott and Thomson proved their brilliance in another critical area. They always seemed to be able to find reliable funding for new enterprises. Garrett, on the other hand, began to resort to bonded and unsecured debt to meet the conflicting demands of financing the B&O's costly ventures to stay competitive while still keeping his promise of generous dividends to himself and fellow stockholders. This differed dramatically from the company's early years, when the B&O had been built largely through private and public investments.

Besides the duo of Thomson and Scott, Garrett also faced other, equally challenging railroading giants, not the least of whom was the tough, unlettered "Commodore" Cornelius Vanderbilt. Lack of a formal education did not deter the man who ultimately would become the most powerful railroad man in the world. "An old sea captain who knew him well used to say it was fortunate the Commodore was not educated," the *New York Times* wrote, "for had he been he would have been a

god.”³⁹ Vanderbilt was 72 years old when the war ended and already rich, but that was hardly enough of an accomplishment for him. He proceeded to jump into railroading with all the vision, intense vigor, aggressiveness, and ruthlessness that had already made him a fortune in the steamship business.

Railroading was not new to Vanderbilt. He had casually dabbled in the industry before the war, most notably in 1857, when he acquired control of the troubled New York and Harlem Railroad, which struggled to compete for New York City–Albany business. He soon saw where the future of transportation lay, and in 1864, he began rapidly assembling a rail system based on the Hudson River Railroad and the old New York Central. Once committed, he went into the business large-scale and for the long run, treating his acquisitions as solid enterprises, rather than speculations to be manipulated. Vanderbilt bought control of existing lines rather than building much of anything new, and, once they were under his thumb, he made certain that they were competently overseen and run. His railroad management style varied greatly from Thomson and Scott’s and represented the vastly different models of corporate executives Garrett had to contend with. Vanderbilt epitomized the consummate railroad financier, who bought the majority of stock in a company and took charge. His counterparts at the Pennsylvania Railroad, by contrast, owned little stock in the company, ran it on behalf of the stockholders, and rose to top management by merit, not money.⁴⁰ When, in 1877, Vanderbilt died at the age of 83, his railroad empire stretched from the ornate Grand Central Depot in New York City to Chicago, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, with a network in between that reached most of the important Midwestern population and industrial centers.

With much the same strategic vision as Thomson and Scott, Vanderbilt aimed to equal the Pennsylvania Railroad’s geographic reach and market power, and the two systems came to be strong, closely balanced competitors. Inevitably, too, Vanderbilt’s New York–based empire and Garrett’s B&O would come into conflict for traffic between areas west of the Alleghenies, particularly in the Midwest, and in the rival eastern ports of New York and Baltimore. But Garrett held the advantage. With the B&O being the shortest route between an eastern seaport—Baltimore—and Chicago, Garrett did not easily yield to the Commodore’s demands. The two men competed less with each other than with other lines. Perhaps for this reason, relations between Vanderbilt and Garrett generally remained mostly cordial and lacked the bitter personal enmity and intense corporate rivalry that marked Garrett’s relationship with the Pennsylvania Railroad—although when tempers flared between the Pennsylvania and the B&O, the New York Central often found itself caught in the middle.⁴¹

Then there was Jay Gould. “Secretive,” “shadowy,” “scheming,” “unscrupulous,” and “dark” were some of the more printable adjectives that Gould’s contemporaries

variously used to describe the slightly built, sickly financier. Some descriptions were far more sinister: “the most hated man in America,” or, even more damning, “the worst man on earth since the beginning of the Christian era.”⁴² Gould was all of that, to a greater or lesser degree. His reputation for aloofness might have been attributed to his inherent shyness and introspection.⁴³ But he was also brilliant, creative, and an individualist of the first order. And, as time went on, Gould, too, matured as a manager and helped build up some of the companies he controlled. He started out in the leather-tanning business and, following that, got into his first railroad venture in 1861, at age 25, by buying into Vermont’s little Rutland and Washington Railroad and serving as its president. Dropping that company in 1865, he then turned financial speculator in New York, but by 1867, he found himself involved in the financially prostrate Erie Railway, along with the gaunt, ascetic speculator Daniel Drew and his opposite, the well-fed, flamboyant, ebullient “Jubilee Jim” Fisk. Commodore Vanderbilt so admired Drew’s business prowess that he entrusted his son William to the “furtive master of speculation and subterfuge” for training in the finer nuances of Wall Street insider trading and speculation.⁴⁴

A year later, as a byproduct of the legendary and too-often-retold Erie Wars—the battle for control of the Erie Railway between Vanderbilt and the Gould-Drew-Fisk trio—Gould won out as the Erie’s president. A tumultuous time for the Erie followed, during which Gould made sincere efforts to improve the company, while also enriching himself. But rivals ousted him in 1872. Subsequently, Gould moved in and out of various other railroad companies in the East, West, and Southwest, including the Union Pacific, the Missouri Pacific, and the Wabash, all the while maintaining his status as “the phantom of Wall Street,” with no one quite knowing where or how he would stealthily strike again. Although often a thorn in the side of one railroad mogul or another, Gould’s relations with Garrett remained fairly predictable—an ally in some circumstances, an enemy in others. When Gould died of tuberculosis in 1892 at age 56, he left a decently managed, 10,000-mile rail system in the Midwest and Southwest, including the Union Pacific and the Missouri Pacific Railroads, that extended as far west as the Rockies.

Garrett held a far better reputation than the more notorious railroad buccaneers, an “honorable position among the great railroad kings of the day,” the *American Railroad Journal* pronounced. “Mr. Garrett has shown that scrupulous regard for his promises for which he is distinguished.”⁴⁵ Not everyone agreed. As William H. Osborn, former president of the Illinois Central, wrote to his fellow railroad man, William K. Ackerman: “I made up my mind about John W. Garrett 25 years ago and have given them [Garrett and the B&O] wide berth. They will get very cold comfort from this individual.”⁴⁶

Garrett's personality and management style differed from his principal rivals; he was generally less aggressive and, in the earlier postwar years at least, less inclined to take risks. As a young man under his father's watchful eye at RG&S, Garrett had learned to be careful and methodical. He lacked the more comprehensive vision of the Thomson-Scott team or the Commodore. And, in executing his expansionist strategies, he displayed little of the competitive brutality practiced by some of his peers. By the business standards of the Gilded Age, Garrett remained remarkably straightforward and conventional in his financial dealings, staying clear of Wall Street's anything-goes circus of securities manipulation. "Time would show that John Garrett could hold his own in this group of railroad carnivores, but for the moment, he chose to walk more slowly."⁴⁷

Postwar Railroad Combat

The postwar power struggles Garrett faced between railroad protagonists played out in a no-holds-barred drama, with highly flexible rules and ethics. The methods used for acquiring companies, warding off poachers, and dealing with competitors included economic extortion, predatory pricing, political bribery, financial manipulation, and whatever else a creative business mind could come up with. Along with unprecedented railroad growth and economic dominance came the attendant lawlessness and corruption at the highest levels: buying political favors, skirting even the most minimal laws that tried to rein in the railroads' reckless behavior, and, eventually, the public's disenchantment with the ungovernable tycoons.

The combination of reliable railroad transport and speedy telegraph communication revolutionized postwar commerce and economic growth, particularly in mass production and the distribution of goods.⁴⁸ Wartime railroad building and repairing produced technology that made postwar construction quicker and cheaper than ever before, both in the design of locomotives and railcars and in construction techniques. Railroads could now more efficiently scale mountains and cross rivers that once seemed impassable, much different from the B&O's two-decade construction struggles in getting to Wheeling. Eli Janney's 1868 automatic coupler, George Westinghouse's invention of air brakes a year later, and Henry Bessemer's more efficient process for steelmaking—pioneered in 1875 at the mill Andrew Carnegie named for his mentor, J. Edgar Thomson—continuously boosted railroad capability, producing a profound and stimulating effect on the country's economic growth and on how that economy operated.⁴⁹ As the railroad industry grew, so did the number of trade publications that watched its every move: *Railroad Gazette*, *American Railroad Journal*, *Railway Age*, *Railway Review*, and *Locomotive Engineering*, among

others.⁵⁰ New industrial research organizations tested materials and technological methods to improve safety.

The B&O faced competition from all sides, not just from the big trunk lines. The prewar enthusiasm for building small, connecting railroads reached fever pitch after the war; local boosters began promoting railroads in their regions, and every little town, as well as major cities, wanted its own railroad. Many weaker and sometimes redundant lines plunged into the mix, resulting in often-chaotic and overlapping services—and, predictably, more rivalries. Some ventures proved to be well founded, with solid business prospects; some had sincere but unrealistic ambitions; and some were purely speculative. A few amounted to outright commercial blackmail, built to invade someone else's territory with the intent of being bought out by the victim. Once constructed, all railroads—interstate or regional—represented sunk investments for their owners and creditors, and, healthy or not, they had to be kept alive by whatever means practical—some fair, and some not. As a result, the industry became less stable, characterized by seemingly endless rate wars and other less-than-respectable business-generating practices, with increasingly skittish investors and nervous financial institutions looking on. The postwar frenzy of railroad building, mergers, and acquisitions “bore a considerable resemblance to the territorial jockeying of feudal baronies in medieval times.”⁵¹

On the positive side, this building spree offered numerous previously inaccessible and untouched markets, some of which did not even exist before. Canals, with their limitations, could not reach deep into the hinterland. Railroads, by contrast, could get to established towns and remote hamlets and often created entirely new commercial hubs. In his postwar president's statements in the B&O's *Annual Reports*, Garrett continually emphasized the importance of economic growth, spurred by ever-expanding B&O lines: “The population and number of towns upon this division continue to increase . . . leading to new towns which are becoming the centres of trade of the region through which the line passes.”⁵²

At every turn, the government aided and abetted industrialists as partners, not obstructionists, in the surging postwar capitalism. The railroads' carrying capacity, speed of delivery, and economies made it possible to concentrate manufacturing, processing, and the production of raw materials where they could be done most efficiently, using mass production methods and materials-handling techniques. The finished goods could then be distributed cheaply and reliably over the ever-growing national rail network. Much the same happened in agriculture, with production concentrated in the largest and most fertile areas and the yields, particularly wheat, carried in trainloads to the growing urban centers and to export piers.

Garrett, and others among the more perceptive and aggressive leaders in the railroad business, faced the immediate challenge in the years after the war of start-

ing to acquire or control access to emerging or key markets beyond their own existing limits and of shaping the flows of traffic along their own routes. This process naturally pitted the four trunk lines, plus some new interlopers, against one another in a high-stakes power struggle to establish a strong presence in the same key markets and junction points. Any straggler risked being physically hemmed in, closed off from the greatest opportunities and left to either make the best of what was left or simply go bankrupt.

Rate wars, temporarily tamed by generous wartime governmental compensation, roared back with renewed vigor and vitriol. Pricing became a favorite weapon among the railroads, although a dangerous one. Effective economic regulation by the government was still decades away, leaving the railroads to manipulate how they charged customers in any way that suited their competitive needs of the moment. As they did before the war, railroads cut their rates—sometimes to absurdly low levels—to financially destabilize a competitor or weaken an acquisition target, at times to the point of driving these other railroads into bankruptcy. This corporate warfare weakened everyone, however.

Having come through a violent war, railroad tycoons, now considering themselves sovereign rulers—great lords—over their domains, often used war and combat metaphors, much like the Civil War generals they had come to admire. The protracted war, “with its manly virtues of force and fury, only served to gild the language of the corporate executives with strong, vivid language.”⁵³ Railroad presidents simply carried on the combat: this time, internecine warfare with their competitors. Rate wars provided the common denominator among all railroads, and their executives fired off missives to each other with the hostile vocabulary of war: “enemies,” “pirates,” “attacks,” “battle,” and “allies” punctuated their letters and cables.

Garrett, too, found the language of war useful, especially when aimed at his perennial nemesis, the Pennsylvania Railroad, complaining to vice president Tom Scott that “wasteful battles are made against the interest we all represent.” B&O executive John King Jr. gloated about a victory over the Pennsylvania: “The loss of prestige resulting from their defeat in the recent war has been very great.” In another instance, Garrett wanted to “make a treaty” to settle a dispute with Cornelius Vanderbilt’s New York Central Railroad; later, he accused the Commodore of “blockading” his warehouses.⁵⁴

As the railroads targeted key markets—now booming in a period of postwar prosperity—the belligerent language and the competition grew fiercer. Garrett could not plead innocence in inciting some of the conflict, admitting to Thomson that he deliberately undercut fares. In 1866, the four trunk line presidents convened frequently for peace conferences—at least four times in May 1866 in New York, Indianapolis, and Buffalo—and reluctantly admitted that “the rates of freight are

inexcusably and unremuneratively low and ought to be advanced.”⁵⁵ One meeting resulted in the railroad men assigning a commissioner, Samuel Sloan, the well-respected president of the Hudson River Railroad, the unpleasant and endless task of investigating all charges of rate violations, with each railroad’s president vowing more transparency in his line’s account books and swearing off the influence buying of smaller lines to lower rates.⁵⁶

Garrett often resorted to his trump card—citing the war-battered condition of the B&O—to ask for special dispensation in rates until the physical damage could be repaired. “Our westbound traffic has been very limited, and still continues to be quite small,” Garrett explained to Thomson, in a thinly disguised attempt to once again slash rates. “To command any portion of this traffic, it has been necessary to make differences under the rate charged by routes in perfect condition”—a deliberate swipe at the Pennsylvania Railroad, which had escaped major damage during the war.⁵⁷

Despite a frequent volley of jabs at competitors, railroad men in the postwar years continued their efforts, started before the war, to cooperate with each other to unify the nation’s rail system. As the railroad network had expanded in the 1850s, cooperation among railroads became necessary to facilitate the flow of traffic among the markets and allow rolling stock to be freely interchanged from railroad line to railroad line as freight moved across the country. By 1869, goods could move over increasingly longer distances and between an ever-growing variety of origins and destinations. In doing so, a shipment often had to be transported via two or more independent connecting railroads. Out of necessity, the big rail lines were forced to cooperate in a fiercely competitive market if they hoped to offer better service. “We are not independent roads, but are parts only of great lines extending from Chicago to New York and Boston,” the 1869 *Annual Report* of the Michigan Central Railroad Company explained, “and their interests and prosperity are connected to the interest and prosperity of the whole line.”⁵⁸

Cooperation among railroads opened a Pandora’s box of problems, not least of which were the track gauges of the connecting lines. They frequently differed—often by several inches—resulting in shipments that had to be unloaded and reloaded at each connecting point, a process that was clearly slow and expensive and offered infinite opportunities for damage, theft, and unexplained disappearances. Postwar cooperation spurred the gradual adoption of a common track gauge, the development of standardized car designs, and the acceptance of uniform rules and accounting methods for interline car movements.⁵⁹

One particularly vexing field of conflict—but, ironically, one that continued to help to unify the nation’s disparate rail systems—were the “fast-freight lines,” a strategy that had developed as an entrepreneurial response to a growing problem in

shipping freight by rail. Although the fast-freight-line concept had materialized in the antebellum years from two companies that shipped via the New York Central and the Erie Railroads, respectively, it did not get a real foothold until the period of the war itself, when the need for faster, uninterrupted movement became more critical. At that point, the Pennsylvania Railroad had jumped in with a third major line.

After the war and the resumption of rapid railroad expansion, numerous new fast-freight firms moved into the business, a few with still-familiar names, such as Wells Fargo and American Express. Others were effectively railroad subsidiaries, most notably a pair under the Pennsylvania Railroad's wing. Fast-freight lines operated as separate companies that, for a premium rate, moved shipments almost seamlessly over multiple railroads, offering shippers an expedited schedule with no intermediate rehandling and a single responsibility for the entire movement. A fast-freight line owned its own cars, many of which were equipped with specially designed wheel sets that could operate satisfactorily on the differing track gauges. A fast-freight line solicited business with its own employees or contractors, collected the revenue through its own billing system, and, in turn, contracted with the railroads for moving its cars, often on an agreed-upon schedule. For the railroads' freight customers—particularly those shipping high-value goods—it proved to be an excellent solution, even if it was more costly. But for large railroad companies, like the B&O, the fast-freight lines turned out to be unprofitable. As independent entities, the fast-freight lines could play competitive railroads against one another to get the best deal for themselves. And, since they did not have common-carrier obligations, they could be selective and go after the most profitable part of the railroads' traffic—high-value merchandise shipments moving in volume between major population centers.

Garrett would have none of it. He refused to allow competitors' express trains to run on B&O tracks and spent much political capital trying to do away with the whole fast-freight system. He huffed out of Big Four meetings, often demanding a vote and then storming out of the room when he lost.⁶⁰ Other railroads took a more practical tack, starting their own express lines. Ignoring Garrett's entreaties to abolish the system, the Pennsylvania Railroad initiated its own Star Union and Empire express lines. In short order, another Garrett-Scott war ensued, with Garrett citing the Pennsylvania's "vicious and costly" commitment to their express lines, allowing it to take revenues from other railroads.⁶¹ Garrett hastily withdrew from the 1866 conference agreement, giving him wide latitude to resume undercutting his rivals. Abruptly—in a move that should have surprised no one—Garrett reversed himself on the fast-freight idea and, in 1871, established the B&O's Continental Line to serve the Baltimore–Cincinnati–St. Louis route.⁶²

Whatever the problems of the fast-freight lines, and despite the railroad men's constant saber rattling, this innovation represented a major step toward unifying

the nation's rail system, "spelling an end to primitive localism on American railroads."⁶³ The fast-freight lines spurred the railroad industry's inevitable movement toward the establishment of an unrestricted interchange of cars among all railroads, and the concurrent establishment of a nationwide standard track gauge (set at the older English 4'8.5" gauge). They also led to the creation of common standards for freight car design, as well as formalized interline accounting procedures to handle car-rental and revenue-division payments.⁶⁴ By the late nineteenth century, the country's railroad network became a true nationwide system that allowed shipments to flow unimpeded over any number of railroads between virtually all points in North America. For all their posturing, harrumphing, door slamming, and adolescent tantrums over rates and fast freight, railroad presidents in the first decades after the war were bringing the industry—albeit kicking and screaming—into a new sense of "railroad unity." It would not be apparent for some time, however. For the time being, the industry—in the throes of unprecedented expansion and competition—continued to be characterized by stock watering, corporate manipulations, ruthless struggles for power, and the formation of gigantic corporations.⁶⁵

Rebuilding Baltimore

The war had displaced Baltimore from the nation's third-largest industrial city to the sixth-largest, and Garrett was not about to let his beloved city continue to lose ground. In the prewar years of his B&O presidency, he had often expressed his wish to make Baltimore "a great ocean port, a world port," with improved docks and warehouses at the city's waterside and a B&O steamship line equipped to sail around the world.⁶⁶

Immediately after the war, he set about achieving his goal. Slowly, the city regained its footing. The manufacture of men's clothing and the canning of Chesapeake Bay oysters, as well as fruits and vegetables, jumpstarted the city's industries in the years immediately after the war; tin, copper, and steel manufacturing soon followed.⁶⁷ For Garrett, all those goods needed national and international distribution. "Navigation by steam," Garrett pronounced at the December 1865 B&O board meeting, "is rapidly superseding, in all parts of the world, the use of sail vessels."⁶⁸ Garrett's prewar experience with international shipping aboard RG&S's vessels—*Monumental City*, *Samuel Hicks*, and *Atlas*—prepared him for the B&O's seafaring trade.

Soon, water transport consumed almost as much of Garrett's energy as did B&O tracks on land, and the competition was no less fierce to secure the right harbor and sailing vessels. Connecting B&O shipments from train to boat, and then sailing them out to global ports, became a critical link in the company's transportation

system, as it was with most major railroads. Expanding Baltimore's port facilities became paramount in Garrett's postwar economic plan for the city. In 1849, the B&O had paid \$176,000 for prime real estate stretching 2,600 feet along Baltimore's deep-water harbor not far from Fort McHenry, aptly naming the area Locust Point for its bountiful indigenous trees.⁶⁹ Before the war, Garrett had lobbied to expand Locust Point, but concern by businesses located on other ports surrounding Baltimore's harbor (particularly at Fell's Point) limited its use to coal transport only.

The B&O purchased three government-surplus steamers for an overseas route and received a US contract for mail service between Baltimore and Liverpool, England. Instead of using Locust Point, Garrett based this service at Fell's Point, which was not directly reached by B&O tracks. The service began with great fanfare and festive crowds on October 2, 1865. Garrett placed newspaper advertisements announcing this new development, noting that its carrier "was an 'A-1 splendid steamship.'" In a speech delivered a year after the line's inauguration, Garrett hailed the trans-Atlantic venture and noted that "the railroad was pleased by the enterprise." He cited specifics: "14 voyages from Baltimore to Liverpool had carried passengers and full cargoes, and 12 voyages back from Liverpool to Baltimore had full cargoes and a large number of passengers."⁷⁰ Despite Garrett's glowing reports, the operation failed. The three ships were too small and too slow to compete with packet services from New York Harbor. The Baltimore service became erratic, and the last ship sailed from Liverpool on October 14, 1868, just three years and thirty transatlantic trips after it had started. But it held the important distinction of being the first US flag line on the Atlantic Ocean following the Civil War. The B&O later sold its three ships to coastal shipping lines.

After the war, the need to expand Locust Point became more obvious. The bituminous coal fields of Western Maryland and West Virginia turned out to be far richer than previously thought—a bonanza for the only two railroads servicing the area: the B&O and one of its subsidiaries, the Northwestern Virginia Railroad. Many optimists estimated that the coal deep in the earth would last indefinitely. The B&O needed larger, more efficient facilities to bring the bounty to Baltimore for export, and Locust Point, with B&O tracks leading directly to the wharves, seemed to be the obvious choice for expansion. In 1870, Garrett, while on a speaking tour, described the ever-enlarging Locust Point facilities, with its two piers, 650 feet in length and 100 feet in width, covered with fireproof warehouses. "Upon these piers are double-tracked railways," Garrett explained, "so that foreign steamers come into our port immediately alongside these piers, and the only expense of transfer is the movement from the ship to the railway car over the platform of forty feet." To make Locust Point more efficient and accessible to foreign trade, he planned to dig deeper channels from Locust Point to the Chesapeake Bay, "shortening by several miles the

distance between the wharves of Baltimore and the deep water of the Bay and diminish[ing] the difficulties of pilotage.”⁷¹

Garrett also recognized another source of income for both the B&O and Baltimore: immigration, which would nicely complement the B&O’s anticipated commercial transport. In 1867, Garrett signed an agreement with the North German Lloyd Steamship Company to form, as the *Baltimore Sun* reported, “an unbroken commercial relationship between this city and the great maritime port of the German Empire” to transport people and valuable goods from Bremerhaven, Europe’s largest port for immigrant embarkation.⁷² Baltimore had enjoyed successful commercial ties with the port city of Bremen for decades, and a prominent Baltimore businessman and German immigrant, Albert Schumacher, helped seal the steamship deal.⁷³ By 1868, two new steamers were built for this service, with four additional ships added later. The B&O paid for half the expense of building them.⁷⁴

On March 24, 1868, the first jointly owned North German Lloyd–B&O steamship, the *Baltimore*, sailed into Locust Point after making the eleven-day crossing from Bremen, with Baltimoreans more than ready to celebrate their city’s postwar commercial resurrection. The War Department ordered the guns at Fort McHenry to fire a salute, and celebrants paraded through Fell’s Point, across the harbor from Locust Point. That evening, the B&O treated the ship’s captain and crew to a banquet. On the return trips to Europe, the holds of the B&O ships were packed with grain, coal, and, by 1869, gunpowder from the E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company’s powder works on the Brandywine River, near Wilmington, Delaware.

The B&O built an immigration terminal for the new North German Lloyd service at Locust Point. Unlike the competition in New York, European immigrants coming through Locust Point could go directly from their ships to railroad cars to transport them to points west. Never missing an opportunity to laud Baltimore’s advantages over New York’s, Garrett described the awkward and time-consuming three-step process in New York, where immigrants arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey, were ferried to the Castle Garden Immigration Center at the foot of Manhattan, and again ferried to trains. By contrast, in Baltimore, customs officials conducted inspections on the piers.⁷⁵

In its first ten years, Locust Point processed 104,815 immigrants.⁷⁶ Many of them hardly touched Maryland soil after disembarking at Locust Point’s Immigration Pier, being efficiently processed through customs and then heading off to the hinterlands on B&O trains. But many stayed to establish lively Baltimore neighborhoods and fuel Baltimore’s postwar industries in retailing, cabinetmaking, shipbuilding, sailcloth making, and finance.⁷⁷ Europeans, especially Germans, favored Baltimore’s port in the years immediately after the Civil War, partly because of the tobacco trade and partly because of the close relations that existed between Baltimore and Bre-

men.⁷⁸ Thanks in large measure to Garrett's immigration initiatives, by 1890, Germans composed more than 11 percent of Baltimore's total population and brought with them another indispensable postwar industry: brewing.

Locust Point became a boon both to Baltimore—offsetting the city's postwar economic slump—and to the B&O's bottom line. Besides its robust commercial traffic, the port operated tax free, a result of Garrett's lobbying efforts with the Maryland General Assembly.⁷⁹ Although Baltimore had always enjoyed a healthy export-import business, it increasingly focused primarily on exporting coal and grain. And all those abundant and profitable shipments sailed from the modern Locust Point complex. Competitors watched with envy. "The city of New York, always handicapped by highly inadequate port facilities, looked hungrily upon the Garrett development," a commentator noted of Locust Point's seamless thoroughfare between sea and land.⁸⁰ By 1867, Garrett had expanded the hub into a model of modern transportation efficiency. It comprised sprawling coal yards, coffee and tobacco warehouses, massive grain elevators, and cattle pens—since Baltimore was developing its own slaughtering industry. By 1880, the largest of its enormous grain elevators held nearly two million bushels. Locust Point, one observer noted, "was, perhaps, the greatest contribution to the city's commercial expansion."⁸¹

To handle freight and passenger traffic destined to points northeast of Baltimore, the B&O established water transfers across the harbor to connect Locust Point with the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad's line to Philadelphia.⁸² By 1873, Garrett reported to the B&O board that the Locust Point development was a hands-down success. It was bringing "increased foreign trade to Baltimore" and had "shortened by several miles the distance between the wharves of Baltimore and the deep water of the Bay."⁸³

As Garrett focused much of his time, energy, and B&O resources in the first decade after the war to fulfill his dream of making Baltimore a major commercial hub, his Eastern rivals looked elsewhere, to far larger and more lucrative markets: Pittsburgh, Chicago, and New York. After the war, the Pennsylvania Railroad, in particular, predicted New York's potential. Although this railroad had been born and bred in Philadelphia, Thomson and Scott recognized reality and, in 1871, acquired control of the railroad routes between Philadelphia and the short distance to New York Harbor, which they made their primary port. The Pennsylvania Railroad's head start to New York would come back to haunt Garrett and the B&O in the years ahead.

Go West, Railroad President—and South

1868–1873

ALTHOUGH HORACE GREELEY denied being the first to advise “Go West, young man, go West,” in the postwar decades, the phrase nonetheless became the marching orders for a generation of Americans. For East Coast railroad presidents, going west meant tapping into the riches of the Midwest and, for some, including Garrett, the defeated South. Within a few years after the Civil War, he would successfully extend the B&O to the Midwest, northwest out of Washington, DC, and ultimately—but not as successfully—into the South. The competition between the B&O and its rivals to get to developing markets captures but a glimpse of the ferocity, political maneuvering, and all-out warfare railroad presidents employed to get ahead of their challengers.

Garrett moved westward on several fronts, more or less simultaneously. He had to strengthen control of the B&O’s already-established connecting lines leading west, namely the Central Ohio Railroad between Bellaire, Ohio (near Wheeling, West Virginia), and Columbus, and the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad between Belpre, Ohio (opposite Parkersburg, West Virginia), and Cincinnati. An essential part of both acquisitions also required building bridges over the Ohio River at Benwood, West Virginia, and at Parkersburg to connect directly to the Columbus and Cincinnati routes. The third project would be to complete the long-stymied stretch of B&O tracks into Pittsburgh. The first two efforts could be done with relatively little external hindrance, although the Ohio River bridges would be expensive and would take some time to construct. Pittsburgh would not be so easy, but in the end, it would be one instance where Garrett scored a major victory against his hated Pennsylvania Railroad rivals.

Financially anemic and a sorry railroad physically, the Central Ohio had lapsed into receivership in 1857. Wartime traffic bolstered its health—among other things, it provided a link in the 1863 great troop movement—and, owing to B&O investment support, it reorganized in 1866. A year later, Garrett leased the railroad. Although

corporately separate, the Central Ohio Railroad became an integral part of the B&O system, and B&O trains rolled into Columbus, the Central Ohio's western terminus.¹ But the Columbus terminal turned out to be a dead end for the B&O, since all the connecting lines there ended up either as Pennsylvania Railroad subsidiaries or fell under Vanderbilt's influence.²

Garrett similarly pumped money into the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad. In 1868, he placed four B&O-appointed directors on the M&C's board, including Johns Hopkins. Another Garrett appointee, B&O vice president John King Jr., won election as president of the M&C. Thereafter, Garrett happily reported to his board, the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad operated as a B&O adjunct, thus ensuring that Garrett had a route as far west as Cincinnati.³ For the time being, Garrett postponed any attempt to absorb the financially ailing, broad-gauge Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, which continued the B&O's advertised route from Cincinnati to St. Louis; the Ohio and Mississippi changed its track gauge to be compatible with the B&O in 1871.⁴

Ever since Garrett had written to his brother in 1837 about the impediments of the Ohio River, he saw the need to build sturdy bridges to more efficiently transport B&O trains over the river to connect to the Midwest. Thirty years later, Garrett's dream finally materialized. Neither the Central Ohio nor the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroads could be of practical competitive use until Garrett completed bridges over the Ohio River—one between Benwood, just south of Wheeling, and the Central Ohio's terminal on the opposite bank at Bellaire; and the second from Parkersburg to Belpre, where the M&C had established a new terminal in 1868. Reaching Wheeling and Parkersburg in the 1850s had marked milestones for the B&O, but passengers and freight had to be ferried across the river between Benwood and Bellaire, a slow and expensive process, using specially built car ferries. Getting beyond Parkersburg proved to be difficult. Until 1868, the original M&C terminal was located eight miles upstream, at Marietta, Ohio, and, unlike the railroad-owned Benwood–Bellaire car ferry operation, passengers and goods had to be transferred to independently owned packet steamers.

Garrett gave the go-ahead to start work on the requisite two iron truss bridges in 1868 and 1869, respectively. Designing and building both bridges was quite challenging, since their central spans had to be both high enough and sufficiently wide to clear the busy river traffic. When finally completed in 1871, they stood as remarkable engineering feats. The Benwood–Bellaire bridge was an impressive 8,566 feet in length, which included a long, curved, stone-arch approach viaduct on the Bellaire side; the Parkersburg structure measured 7,100 feet and, when opened, was considered the longest bridge in the world. Together, the two cost an equally impressive \$2.2 million.⁵ In the 1871 *Annual Report*, Garrett validated his decision to build the

expensive bridge projects, citing dramatic increases in revenues from freight and passengers on the Marietta and Cincinnati and the Ohio and Mississippi Railroads, which completed the B&O's final connection to the West.⁶ In his January 11 report to the board, he pointed out that the "Parkersburg bridge fills the last link which enables the company to furnish the best route between Baltimore, Washington, and the Northern Cities and Cincinnati, and the Great West and the Southwest."⁷ Garrett noted at the board meeting that the company had spent \$6 million on improvements and expansion in the previous three years. To solidify the arrangement with the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad, Garrett secured the election of his vice president, John King Jr., already serving as the M&C's president, to the Ohio and Mississippi board. Garrett now had all the formerly loosely federated lines of the B&O's Great American Central Route from Baltimore to St. Louis, first advertised in 1857 by then president Chauncy Brooks, firmly under his control.

Pittsburgh—At Last

Like his long-delayed dreams of expanding Locust Point and bridging the Ohio River, Garrett completed yet another goal that had been interrupted by the war: getting B&O tracks into Pittsburgh. His family's interest in reaching the now-important commercial hub stretched back two decades, to 1847, when Garrett's father had recognized the need to reach Pittsburgh and joined other concerned Baltimoreans in lobbying the B&O to abandon its plans to get to Wheeling, West Virginia, and instead turn northwestward to the emerging metropolis at the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers. In 1847, the opportunity had passed, but now, almost twenty years later, John Garrett determined to make up for lost time.

As his means to reach that Pennsylvania city, Garrett again turned his attention to the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad, a project that had stalled before the war. The P&C had begun a shaky corporate life in 1837 with the limited aim of connecting the fifty-eight miles between its two namesake cities. By 1853, that line was still not built, but the railroad company had managed to have its Pennsylvania charter modified to include the right to extend beyond Connellsville to some connecting point on the B&O. Through the rest of the 1850s, the B&O attempted to aid the struggling company, doomed at the time by the P&C's financial problems. RG&S had financially backed the P&C until Robert's death in 1857.

There was still hope, however. In 1861, the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad fully completed its rail line between those two cities. In the same year, Garrett bought controlling shares of the company at a bargain price and pledged the B&O's assistance through a \$1 million loan. By 1864, there was enough financial support to resume the project to connect the B&O to the P&C and finally get tracks to Pitts-

burgh. In his usual strategy to secure the B&O's presence in an affiliate's decision making in order to ensure the project's success, Garrett had the B&O's chief engineer, Benjamin Latrobe II, appointed as the P&C's president.

Garrett's ambitious plans to reach Pittsburgh scarcely escaped the notice of Thomson and Scott, who had no intention of letting a rival into their railroad's private domain. In the midst of the Civil War, the Pennsylvania Railroad mounted a devastating two-pronged counterattack—much of it fought in the courts. Exercising his considerable political skills, Scott persuaded the Pennsylvania legislature to repeal the Pittsburgh and Connellsville's charter and to simultaneously push through a bill creating a new Pennsylvania Railroad-controlled company named the Connellsville and Southern Pennsylvania Railroad, which would precisely parallel the P&C's existing and projected route, thus permanently crippling the P&C.

It had not been an easy victory for Scott. Many Pittsburghers disliked the domination of the Pennsylvania Railroad, which meant they had to do business in a one-railroad city. Additionally, some thought Scott's scheme was questionable under the state's constitution. Nonetheless, Scott's manipulative skills and the Pennsylvania Railroad's power within the state carried the day. After the war, Garrett took Scott to court. The cases dragged on through several jurisdictions, with the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad, as B&O's stand-in, winning each time. In January 1868, Garrett won a final appeal in the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, which reinstated the P&C's charter. At last, Garrett could get to Pittsburgh.⁸

Meanwhile, several competitors met in 1870, holding an Erie Conference to discuss terms for the division of receipts from through business and—optimistically—“the discontinuation of competition,” according to the *Railroad Gazette*.⁹ The attendees were executives from Vanderbilt's New York Central and Hudson River Railroads, as well as the Erie, the Pennsylvania, and seven other railroads with lines that participated in the New York–Chicago market in one form or another. Garrett was not present, claiming that he had not been invited because the B&O did not yet have a rail line to Chicago. The *Gazette* suggested other reasons for Garrett's absence, notably, his reluctance at that moment to commit to far-reaching policies among competitors that might impede the B&O's future opportunities in the move westward. “With the line to Pittsburgh almost completed and an extension to Chicago projected and partly provided for,” the *Gazette* asserted in December 1870, “[the B&O will have] an independent line to the seaboard and, likely enough, favorable connections with New York.”¹⁰

Garrett gave William Keyser responsibility for taking the Pittsburgh and Connellsville line into Pittsburgh, and in 1871, Benjamin Latrobe II triumphantly drove the “golden spike” at Fort Hill, a few miles across the Maryland border in Pennsylvania. The victory of finally reaching Scott and Thomson's closely guarded

domain—and the critical Pittsburgh market—was made all the sweeter by the years of legal wrangling the B&O had endured to gain control of the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad and extend it east to Cumberland, Maryland. In the 1871 *Annual Report*, Garrett confidently wrote, “The road is being supplied with additional locomotives and cars, and it is believed that the sanguine expectations entertained regarding the results of that important line will ultimately be realized.”¹¹ In 1869, a town on the new line, near Fort Hill and sixty miles southeast of Pittsburgh, adopted the B&O president’s name. Today, Garrett, Pennsylvania, is part of the Johnstown metropolitan area.

Having reached Pittsburgh, Garrett unexpectedly stopped, doing nothing to have his railroad stretch farther westward. There would be some later proposals and one definite opportunity offered to him, but the B&O’s Pittsburgh extension remained a dead-end line for the rest of his life. Nevertheless, Garrett could rest assured that the B&O’s Pittsburgh presence continued to be a thorn in the Pennsylvania Railroad’s side. As the iron and steel industry and its allied metalworking businesses grew, the city became a major source of rail traffic. Andrew Carnegie, a staunch believer in the future of Pittsburgh, located his pioneering new Bessemer-process mill, the J. Edgar Thomson Works, outside Pittsburgh in 1875, so it could have access to both the B&O and the Pennsylvania Railroads.

Concurrent with completing his two major projects—to bridge the Ohio River and to reach Pittsburgh—Garrett planted the seed for yet another ambitious undertaking: a B&O line from Baltimore to New York. Both during the war and after, New York City surged as the nation’s financial nerve center, gaining power the moment the Civil War broke out, when it became apparent that the nation would need to sell bonds to finance the conflict—and Wall Street would make that happen. New York Harbor was already well established as the country’s premier international port. The efficiency of the telegraph—the “lightening wire” as it became known—and the invention of the stock ticker in 1867 sealed New York’s prominence in making speedy financial transactions.¹² New York City ruled not only in finance, but also in culture. The city’s fabulously rich elite, known simply as the “Four Hundred” and led by its inimitable doyenne, *the* Mrs. Astor, became the undisputed social arbiters for the nation.

In the years immediately after the war, the only way to travel between New York and Washington, DC, was by a patchwork of rail lines and endless transfers. The jerry-built route, in which the B&O collaborated with northeastern regional trains and ferries, provided the only service, yet it was hardly efficient or direct. In 1868, a passenger could leave New York on the 8:40 a.m. ferry and arrive at the B&O’s Washington, DC, terminal eight hours and forty minutes later.¹³ Much to the discomfort of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s hometown of Philadelphia—and to

Garrett—J. Edgar Thomson recognized New York's prime importance to his growing system early on, and in 1871, he negotiated an expensive lease of all of the then-existing rail lines (plus a canal) between Philadelphia and New York Harbor.

Tired of tiptoeing around the Pennsylvania Railroad and its regional alliances to reach New York, Garrett made the case to build an independent B&O line at the board's January 11, 1871, meeting. Taking aim directly at his longtime nemesis to the north, he asserted that it was time "to free this community from the excessive demands made by existing companies for their services." He assured the board that "eminent capitalists in these cities for some time past felt convinced" of the need for the B&O line, adding that "Washington and the South and West will be greatly benefited by the construction of this road . . . [and] millions of population of these cities and regions to be served will greatly benefit."¹⁴ But the Baltimore–New York project would have to wait. As Garrett laid the foundation for his newest venture, he soon had to divert his attention to once again warding off the Pennsylvania Railroad from its latest intrusion into B&O territory.

The Pennsylvania Railroad's Invasion of Washington, DC

As Garrett was fighting and winning the battle to breach the Pennsylvania Railroad's fiefdom at Pittsburgh, Thomson and Scott were busy breaking a treasured B&O monopoly: the Baltimore–Washington, DC, business. Having entered B&O territory in 1861 through their working control of the Northern Central Railway, Thomson and Scott started looking south to the nation's capital. This time, though, it would not be so easy. Garrett's position in this market looked legally and politically impregnable.

When the B&O began building its Washington Branch in the early 1830s, it did so with the state of Maryland's encouragement, as well as with a substantial stock investment by the state. In return, under the line's 1833 charter, the state not only received dividends from its stock but also took a hefty 20 percent tax off the top of all passenger tickets sold. Given this lucrative income source, the state had no reason to charter any competing railroad over that route.¹⁵ During the Civil War, however, the capital's dependence on the B&O's single line, as well as problems elsewhere along the chain of independent railroads between Washington, DC, and New York, caused political concerns that Thomson, Scott, and Simon Cameron were only too happy to exploit. Several proposals for a federally built new Washington, DC–New York railroad materialized, but Garrett and his allies successfully beat them back. But even with the war's end, the idea of starting a direct line between these cities—an "air line"—refused to die. In January 1866, the *American Railroad Journal* reported that Thaddeus Stevens, the powerful US congressional representative from

Pennsylvania, introduced a new “air line” bill, proposing a \$10 million, government-sponsored, mixed public/private corporation to build the new railroad.¹⁶ Not by coincidence, J. Edgar Thomson, Tom Scott, Simon Cameron, and a mix of other powerful East Coast businessmen served as commissioners for the proposed project.

While still fighting Scott and Thomson’s move to undermine the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad’s route into Pittsburgh, Garrett simultaneously sprang into action to oppose Stevens’s air line bill. Writing to Isaac Hinckley, president of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, about the “hostile elements at Washington,” Garrett assured Hinckley that he had “posted various members of Congress,” but knew “the enemy is working with great adroitness, energy, and thoroughness.”¹⁷ He advised Hinckley “to urge our friends at all points to be vigorous in protecting your interests. I think it will be well for you to be on the spot in person.” Once again, Garrett mobilized an effective opposition, distributing a pamphlet, “The Stevens Railroad Bill and How It Will Operate,” to all senators, explaining the negative effects of the bill. As importantly, Garrett made sure all newspaper editors and politicians who could help his cause received B&O passes. “Our company is extending to members of Congress who are friendly . . . the courtesies of the road,” Garrett wrote, in case there was any misunderstanding about his benevolent gesture.¹⁸ His strategy worked, and the Stevens bill finally died quietly in early 1867.

But Thomson and Scott had not built a railroading empire by giving up. They and their allies continued to push for the lucrative Washington, DC, route. Soon they found another way to get around the Maryland charter problem. Back in 1853, a group of southern Maryland tobacco growers had chartered a company called the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad to carry their product north to Baltimore as well as south to the Potomac River. With its financing and traffic prospects dim, the project languished, still not built, although around 1861 its chief promoter, the politically influential Oden Bowie, a member of the Maryland House of Delegates, appealed to Garrett for aid. Seeing no advantages for the B&O at the time, Garrett turned him down, and the B&P lay dormant.¹⁹ After the war, Bowie made the Pennsylvania Railroad aware of the B&P’s charter and of one particular—and long overlooked—provision: the railroad was permitted to build branches up to twenty miles long from its main line out of Baltimore. The Pennsylvania Railroad had at last found a solution to get around the B&O’s stronghold and advance into Washington, DC. The B&P’s projected route could be aligned in such a way that it came within twenty miles of the capital, and a branch could then be built into Washington.²⁰

The Pennsylvania Railroad speedily embraced Bowie’s Baltimore and Potomac company, guaranteeing part of its bonds in August 1866 and arranging construction through a group consisting of Scott and several Pennsylvania Railroad allies. Exerting his power in the Maryland General Assembly, Garrett did his best to prevent

any extension of the B&P's charter. Unfortunately, Maryland had elected a new governor in 1869, Oden Bowie, who also remained the titular president of the B&P. Bowie managed to thwart Garrett within the state, and the battle then moved to Washington, where it was up to Congress to permit entry into the District of Columbia. Again Garrett lobbied and delayed action on the proposal. Nonetheless, Congress granted a charter to the Pennsylvania Railroad in February 1867. Helping to push the bill through Congress was Garrett's archenemy, Simon Cameron, who had returned to the Senate in 1866 after his brief exile in Russia and had resumed his services on behalf of his Pennsylvania friends.²¹ Later legislation even gave the Pennsylvania Railroad the right to cross the National Mall at grade to a station adjacent to Pennsylvania Avenue, creating a dangerous eyesore that lasted until Union Station was built in the early 1900s.

Construction started on the B&P in 1868, but Garrett-inspired opposition delayed partial completion until 1872. Difficult tunneling work through Baltimore further held up a full opening until 1873, but, once accomplished, the project put the Pennsylvania Railroad in a dominant position to tap into the Washington, DC–Philadelphia–New York trade. It also gave Washington access to the Pennsylvania Railroad's western system. Not only that, but the expensive new line through Baltimore provided access to a large deepwater port area on the city's east side that was developed as an effective competitor of Garrett's Locust Point terminal.²²

The Pennsylvania Railroad—still stinging from years of Garrett's lack of cooperation on the route of its affiliate, the Northern Central Railway, into Baltimore and victorious over the B&O in getting to Baltimore and Washington, DC—threatened yet another Garrett project: westbound traffic out of the nation's capital. The B&O had first reached Washington, DC, in 1835, and in 1851, the railroad had replaced its first simple station there with a fashionable Italianate structure designed by Niernsee and Neilson. But Washington remained relatively isolated from major transportation hubs. While the northeastern traffic coming from Baltimore to Washington was amply serviced as early as 1853, five years before Garrett took over the B&O presidency, concerned citizens and financiers in Washington, DC, formed the Metropolitan Railroad to run northwest out of the capital and connect to the B&O's Main Stem near Frederick, Maryland. The war and a lack of funding stalled the project. But by the war's end, no one—including Garrett—could dispute the importance of the nation's capital and, with the Pennsylvania Railroad closing in on Baltimore, Garrett had to act.

Immediately after the war, he obtained the charter to the Metropolitan Branch, began surveying the proposed route, and started construction near Point of Rocks; the line was completed in May 1873. It proved to be “a costly line,” Garrett admitted in the 1873 *Annual Report*, but its “bold engineering” more than compensated for its

\$3,583,000 cost—about \$83,000 per mile.²³ Over time, the Metropolitan Branch, or “the Met,” as it came to be called, demonstrated its worth. It ran northwest out of the B&O’s Washington, DC, station, through Montgomery County, Maryland, to Point of Rocks, where it joined the B&O’s original Main Stem from Baltimore. The new line provided quick and efficient passenger and freight traffic, and it fueled the growth of new Maryland suburbs along the railway north of Washington, DC, particularly in Montgomery County, at present the most populous county in the state, with more than one million residents.²⁴ Within its borders is the Town of Garrett Park, incorporated in 1898 and named after Garrett’s son, Robert II, and the B&O line that spurred its development.²⁵

Advancing toward Chicago

While completing his long-fought-for Pittsburgh line and contemplating the New York project, Garrett also turned his attention to another important goal—Chicago, the brass ring of trunk-line railroading. Chicago, in existence for just thirty-two years at the end of the Civil War, had turned itself into the Midwest’s principal transportation nexus. Twelve trunk lines and several smaller railroads converged from every direction on the rough-and-tumble city at the southern end of Lake Michigan, and in 1869, it became the embarkation point for passengers heading west to the newly opened Transcontinental Railroad. Lumber from Michigan and Wisconsin, grain from the Great Plains, and natural resources from the West poured in via rail, road, and water. Trainloads of cattle and hogs arrived nonstop at the enormous Union Stockyards, established in 1865; from there the animals were dispatched to the city’s thriving and efficient mass-production slaughterhouses, the largest such concentration in the world, giving Chicago one of its many monikers: “Pork Town.” Thanks to the later adoption of refrigerator cars that allowed widespread distribution, Chicago became the country’s prime supplier of fresh and processed meat.

Despite being snowed-in in winter, infested with insects through the warmer months (the stockyards helped), and dubiously dubbed the “dirtiest city in the world” (another self-styled motto, the “garden city,” notwithstanding), Chicago had grown spectacularly. Between 1850 and 1860, its population had almost quadrupled; by 1870, it stood at 299,000, making Chicago the country’s fifth-largest city; by 1890, it would be the second-largest, after New York City. While St. Louis was still larger at this point in time, Chicago had already displaced it as the principal gateway between East and West. Not even the Great Fire of 1871 could stop the city; the conflagration, in fact, fueled even greater growth—and originality. No longer confined to dilapidated buildings and a haphazard layout, as were older cities, in the decade after the Civil War, Chicago soared as the nation’s most modern city, with its in-

novative architecture, wide expanses of urban parks, bustling new factories, and polyglot population. For Gilded Age tycoons, it meant only one thing: unimaginable riches for those who went after them. And for those in the railroad business, it meant a huge source of freight and passenger traffic. Garrett had every intention of getting his share.

By 1869, both the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Vanderbilt system had tied down their own lines into this strategically vital city. But Garrett was still fighting to get to Pittsburgh then and could not begin a Chicago route. Financial demands of the moment outweighed any major new line acquisitions or construction. And, despite Chicago's attractions, Garrett already had committed the railroad to a more southerly direction, what the B&O advertised as the Great American Central Route to Cincinnati and St. Louis. In addition, Garrett needed to financially bolster the two still-independent lines—the Marietta and Cincinnati and the Ohio and Mississippi Railroads—that formed the route between Parkersburg, West Virginia, and St. Louis. Both of these railroads, along with his own northwestern Virginia line to Parkersburg, required substantial upgrading. Adding to this already costly tally, Garrett also knew he had to build expensive Ohio River bridges in West Virginia, at Benwood and Parkersburg, in order to make any western routes competitively viable. So, always cautious, Garrett had deferred any direct attack on Chicago.

But to stay competitive, he still somehow had to get B&O freight and passengers into Chicago. That meant that for the short term, he had to work with what he had. And what he had under his control in 1869 did not come terribly close to the prize on Lake Michigan. As of the late 1860s, he could reach only as far west as Columbus and Cincinnati in Ohio—to Columbus via Wheeling and the Central Ohio Railroad, and to Cincinnati through Parkersburg and the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad. In 1866, he had finally brought the often-shaky Central Ohio Railroad into his fold through a lease. The M&C was still nominally independent, but the Central Ohio Railroad had fallen under Garrett's firm domination in early 1868, after some heavy B&O financial infusions.²⁶ Both Columbus and Cincinnati at least offered opportunities to serve Chicago by through-traffic agreements with various independent connecting railroads. But this patchwork solution left much to be desired and was meant to be only a temporary expedient. The B&O would have little control over the business beyond its own lines; furthermore, any of its potential partners could fall into unfriendly hands.

In 1865, Garrett had negotiated agreements with two other railroads that, together, linked Columbus with Chicago, but this arrangement fell apart within four years, when the Pennsylvania Railroad picked up one of the connecting lines. Cincinnati proved to be a little more promising after 1867, with a newly established line—the Indianapolis, Cincinnati, and Lafayette—having tracks to Chicago via

Lafayette, Indiana, and Indianapolis. Although that railway was not yet completed, Garrett concluded a traffic agreement in 1868 that allowed him to tap into central Indiana. By the early 1870s, the Cincinnati–Indianapolis route reached Chicago via Kankakee, Illinois.²⁷ It was an indirect route for any East Coast traffic, but it worked well enough to give Garrett the semblance of a presence in Chicago.

By then, Garrett felt ready to move west on his own. In 1871, with Pittsburgh firmly on the B&O map, he committed himself to a Chicago extension—and he now faced even greater challenges. Unlike the Pennsylvania Railroad or the Vanderbilt system, Garrett proposed to build an entirely new railway beyond B&O-leased lines, rather than attempt to buy or lease an existing railroad—a bold move, and one that he knew would be costly. Recognizing the difficulties of the massive project and rationalizing this shift in direction, in the 1871 *Annual Report*, Garrett wrote a deliberately obfuscating narrative meant to disguise the difficulties of the expensive undertaking: “It’s expected that the construction of the Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Chicago Rail Road, fraught as the enterprise will be with such advantages to all the extensive and varied interests with which it is connected, will be rapidly effected.”²⁸ He assured stockholders that the new line to Chicago would cut the railway mileage between that city and Baltimore to 795 miles, nearly 200 miles shorter than other East Coast competitors.²⁹ Always keeping the economic development of the interior in mind, Garrett later insisted that the Chicago line would speed the growth of local towns, resulting in new roads to connect to B&O tracks, thus making rural areas along the B&O line “centers of trade in their region.”³⁰

The most direct way to go would have been to continue west from the B&O’s Pittsburgh terminal, but that meant building a new 470-mile line between Pittsburgh and Chicago—far too great for the B&O’s strained resources. Garrett’s expedient solution called for a route that was more roundabout but could minimize construction costs by making use of as many already-existing, B&O-controlled rail lines as he could. The key turned out to be a line Garrett had picked up in 1869, as an appendage to his recently leased Central Ohio Railroad—the former Sandusky, Mansfield, and Newark Railroad. The latter left the Central Ohio Railroad at Newark and wandered due north for 116 miles, through flat western Ohio farmlands, to a terminal on Lake Erie at Sandusky. Garrett originally hoped to provide the B&O with a Great Lakes outlet, something it needed but thus far lacked. As a Lake Erie port, Sandusky ranked far lower than Buffalo, Cleveland, and Toledo, which were served by the Pennsylvania Railroad, the Vanderbilt lines, or both—but it would be all that the B&O would have for the next thirty years. The Sandusky, Mansfield, and Newark Railroad’s route turned out to be valuable in another way, however. Its northern end came closer to Chicago than any other B&O line—“close” being a relative word in

this case, since there were still about 275 miles to cover. Nonetheless, it offered the cheapest way to get to Garrett's goal.³¹

The best—although circuitous—plan that Garrett eventually devised for his route to Chicago would utilize the B&O's original Main Stem to Benwood (near Wheeling) and then connect to the Central Ohio's line, heading directly west to Newark. At Newark, the route would turn abruptly and head eighty-seven miles directly north, over the Sandusky, Mansfield, and Newark Railroad, as far as a vacant spot in the Ohio flatlands, christened Chicago Junction. Making another sharp turn at Chicago Junction, the line would then proceed west over the only newly built track that was needed—278 miles in virtually a straight line through the mostly unchallenging topography of northwestern Ohio and northern Indiana. Borrowing liberally to underwrite a project that would stretch into the next decade and taking on yet more debt, Garrett nonetheless ordered that no expense be spared in constructing iron and steel tracks and building attractive brick stations as the B&O slowly made its way to Chicago.

The B&O Heads South

Postwar riches lay not just to the west, but south, in the former Confederate states. As early as 1865, concurrent with his initial efforts to expand westward, Garrett also looked to the bankrupt and physically prostrate South. After the war, RG&S and the B&O slowly began buying into the Orange and Alexandria Railroad in Virginia. In 1867, they also arranged a merger with that road's principal connecting line, the Manassas Gap Railroad. But by the end of the 1860s, Garrett made his move for the B&O to gain more control of lines south of the Potomac River.³² Once again, the Pennsylvania Railroad emerged as Garrett's dominant obstacle. The warfare between it and the B&O to get into the South developed into a complex tangle of shifting alliances, fought in a territory where neither combatant was warmly welcomed and where both had to navigate the perilous environment of local Reconstruction-era politics.

Already woefully behind the North at the start of the war, by 1865 the South's track system lay in shambles. What was left of it was disjointed, with inconsistent gauges, inferior rolling stock, and a patchy infrastructure. Construction that was started before the war had been interrupted or abandoned. Worse, most of that system's railroads led circuitously back to one place: the economically destitute South. Few lines connected to booming Northern industrial cities and ports or to the expansive, abundant West. For Garrett, the South's decrepit railroads and untapped markets hung like ripe fruit, ready for picking. In theory, heading south seemed like

a sound—but odd—strategy, considering the B&O's traditional east–west orientation, as well as Garrett's unsettled situation with the larger and more immediately productive markets west of the Ohio River. As his Southern plans quickly materialized, however, Garrett found that his competitors also eyed this prey. Soon enough, the Pennsylvania Railroad developed the same ambitions: to control the key routes between the East, the Southeast, and the Gulf Coast.

Garrett made the first moves—quietly and methodically, as usual. He had patched together the B&O's routes into Pittsburgh and, similarly, with the ongoing project to get lines into Chicago, and he would have to do the same with the southern routes. The B&O held an early advantage in tapping into the South, since it directly reached the two principal north–south gateway points—Washington, DC, and Harpers Ferry, West Virginia—the latter leading to a potential route through Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. Before the Pennsylvania Railroad's bold incursion into Washington, DC, the B&O had the only line between Baltimore and Washington. In the capital, it enjoyed a direct, all-rail connection across the Potomac River to Alexandria, Virginia, six miles south, where it could meet the Orange and Alexandria Railroad's line to Lynchburg, Virginia. B&O traffic moved across the Potomac River over what was known as the Long Bridge, the only rail crossing east of Harpers Ferry. The federal government owned the strategically vital Long Bridge, which had been constructed by the military in 1863 to replace a rickety, superannuated structure built for wagon traffic during the pre-railroad days of the Jefferson administration.

Garrett planned his advance to the south on two fronts: one on the Piedmont, on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains; and the other more inland, up the Shenandoah Valley. Ultimately, he anticipated that both of his Virginia routes would eventually lead to New Orleans, reaching different markets along the way. To execute the first part of his plan in Piedmont country, Garrett started from a junction with the O&A at Manassas, Virginia. Beginning in 1866, the B&O and RG&S together began buying shares of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, and by 1872, they held enough stock to control it. In 1873, they reorganized the O&A again, as a company commonly known as the Virginia Midland Railroad.³³

In a move that should have been all too familiar to Garrett by now, the Pennsylvania Railroad began thwarting the B&O's southward plans over the Potomac River to Alexandria via the strategically important Long Bridge. Tom Scott also had developed designs on the South, starting about 1870, as the Pennsylvania Railroad began building tracks into Washington, DC. While Thomson and Scott relished breaking Garrett's monopoly on the Washington, DC, business, they, like Garrett, saw that the city ultimately could be more important as their gateway to the South than for the rather limited revenue generated by the capital city itself. With Garrett already

moving into the O&A, Thomson and Scott aimed toward Richmond and lines leading southwest from there through the Piedmont country.

This meant that the Pennsylvania Railroad needed to control the Long Bridge, which Garrett was then using as his link to the O&A. In June 1870, Scott got to work with his good friend Simon Cameron and US Representative Calvin W. Gilfillan, from northwestern Pennsylvania. In an astonishing coup—and blow to the B&O—Cameron and Gilfillan pushed through a bill giving the Pennsylvania Railroad exclusive rights “in perpetuity” to the federally owned Long Bridge. Garrett faced more impediments in late 1872, when Alexander Shepherd, director of Washington’s Office of Public Works and known as “The Boss” for the power he wielded in the nation’s capital, ordered the B&O to rebuild its connecting track to the bridge as part of a general street regrading project. Rather than spending the money on a lost cause, Garrett simply gave up and let the B&O be physically blocked off from the vital bridge.³⁴

Left with no direct bridge access to Alexandria, Garrett devised an alternative, but undesirable, plan. He built a connector line off his Washington Branch to a point on the Potomac River opposite Alexandria; from there, he had to ferry cars across the river to the O&A line with a tugboat and a car float. This awkward and expensive Long Bridge bypass began operation in early 1874 and would last for thirty-two years.³⁵ In the meantime, the Pennsylvania Railroad had absorbed the short connecting railroad between Washington, DC, and Alexandria and had built a new thirty-two-mile line south from Alexandria to Quantico, Virginia, where it met the Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Potomac Railroad’s tracks to Richmond. While it never took over the RF&P, the joint Pennsylvania / RF&P route gave it access to the Richmond gateway and the opportunities beyond.

Garrett, angered but undeterred by the Pennsylvania Railroad’s control of the Long Bridge and determined to continue his Piedmont route, proceeded from Alexandria west to Manassas and then south through Culpeper, Gordonsville, and Charlottesville, Virginia. The following year he succeeded in completing the link between the old Orange and Alexandria terminal at Lynchburg and Danville, Virginia.³⁶ He anticipated that the Danville connection would lead to Atlanta via Charlotte, North Carolina, and then farther into the Deep South.

Concurrent with the Piedmont project, Garrett initiated his other Virginia route: the Harpers Ferry–Shenandoah Valley prong of his southern strategy. This involved connections that followed a more inland path, aiming toward Lexington and Salem in Virginia and onward to Chattanooga via Knoxville, Tennessee. In 1867, he leased the Winchester and Potomac Railroad, a historic little independent line that linked Harpers Ferry with Winchester, Virginia, thirty-two miles farther north in the Shenandoah Valley. A year later, B&O financial backing made possible the

completion of the former Manassas Gap line up the Shenandoah Valley into Harrisonburg, Virginia; on its way, it passed nineteen miles south of Winchester at Strasburg, Virginia. In 1870, the B&O bridged the gap between Winchester and Strasburg with new construction, thus giving Garrett a 100-mile through route between Harpers Ferry and Harrisonburg—altogether, almost halfway up the valley toward his ultimate goal at Salem, Virginia. Although what would later become the Virginia Midland Railroad owned half of the full route, Garrett soon rectified that situation. In 1873, he leased the Strasburg–Harrisonburg segment, giving the B&O complete operational control of the entire Shenandoah Valley route.³⁷

That left a 113-mile gap between Harrisonburg and Salem, which Garrett was already busy working to fill. Back in early 1866, a group of businessmen from Staunton, Virginia, twenty-five miles south of Harrisonburg, formed the Valley Railroad of Virginia to span this route. Whether or not Garrett directly inspired this move is unknown, but he wasted no time supporting it and even loaned them a B&O civil engineer, James L. Randolph, to survey it. The group had problems in raising money from local sources. To keep the project moving, Robert E. Lee, president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) in Lexington, Virginia, agreed to assist by lending his name to the project. Lee's association meant that his adopted, but isolated, town of Lexington would be on the railroad map.

A delegation headed by Lee came to Baltimore in April 1869, and they managed to persuade the city of Baltimore and the B&O to each contribute \$1 million, with towns and counties along the line joining in to fund the hopeful project.³⁸ Later that year, Lee won election as the Valley Railroad's titular president, a position he at first declined but later reluctantly agreed to take.³⁹ Unlike many others whom Garrett had persuaded, Lee held little hope for the project's success. The defeated Confederate general lamented, "It seems to me that I have already led enough forlorn hopes."⁴⁰

Sadly, Lee lasted less than two months in his railroad position. He died in Lexington on October 12, 1870, at the age of 63 and was interred in the Lee Chapel at the college. Later, the remains of his beloved mount, Traveller, were buried nearby. Another B&O wartime nemesis, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, was also interred in Lexington. After Jackson's death in the Battle of Chancellorsville in 1863, he was buried in the Presbyterian cemetery renamed in his honor, located a short distance from the Virginia Military Institute, where he had taught before the war.

Funding slowly increased for the Valley Railroad and construction on the first leg, between Harrisonburg and Staunton, started in 1872; grading work south of Staunton toward Salem began the following year. But since Garrett had left much of the financing burden in the hands of local sources, progress continued to be sluggish. The railroad's first section to Staunton did not open until 1874. There it would re-

main for several more years, only twenty-five miles from Harrisonburg, with almost ninety miles yet to go to Salem.

Although financial backers still promoted the Valley Railroad as a local enterprise, by then the B&O owned the largest block of shares and clearly directed the company. And nothing made that more apparent than when Garrett appointed his son, Robert II, as president of the Valley Railroad in 1870. Robert had been working with his brother, Harrison, at RG&S since 1867. John Garrett's move signaled an important role for Robert in the B&O—and Garrett's determination to create a dynasty at the railroad company. Ironically, the young 24-year-old, who only eight years earlier had run away from home to join Lee's march to the North, now succeeded the famed general as a railroad president. Robert's appointment ensured that the Valley Railroad now would be well funded by the B&O—whatever its return on investment. It also would prove that Robert II was not the railroad man his father was—as time would tell. But Garrett hoped that some practical executive experience under his tutelage would benefit the young man, whose interests thus far did not extend much into railroading or, in fact, any business.

Robert Garrett II held the job for four and a half years. His unremarkable, if not haphazard, reign revealed a string of problems. He never got around to trying to negotiate a traffic agreement with the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, which the Valley Railroad was to connect to at its Salem terminal. This normally should have been a first-priority project, considering the V&T's critical importance to the Valley Railroad's purpose. Later, Robert never bothered to tell company stockholders and investors that the V&T had fallen into hostile hands, making the Valley Railroad's future cloudy, at best. He also issued glowing stockholder reports that covered up the company's deteriorating financial condition after 1873, a technique probably learned at his father's knee.⁴¹

Despite Robert's disordered management of the Valley Railroad, a movement, possibly initiated from B&O headquarters, grew to name a town after him on the line, much as his father had been honored with namesake towns in Indiana and Pennsylvania. "Garrettsborough is a proposed town in the northeast portion of Rockbridge on the line of the Valley Railroad between Lexington and Staunton," an anonymous writer described in an editorial entitled "Letters from the People" in the *Railroad Gazette* in 1874. The town had not yet been laid out, but Rawlings & Rowe Contractors already had set up buildings and a commissary. "The place is named in honor of Prince Robert," the writer added cryptically. Most county residents—especially farmers, whose fields were blocked by the contractors' buildings—were opposed to the new town,⁴² and it never materialized.

In any event, by 1874, John Garrett's excursions into the South had achieved solid if slow progress. He now held a "controlled" route from Alexandria to Danville

in the Piedmont, plus the Shenandoah Valley route from Harpers Ferry to Staunton that was reaching tenuously toward Salem. But Tom Scott was not sitting idly by. He became the Pennsylvania Railroad's principal promoter in the South, splitting his energies in multiple directions, including developing the Pennsylvania's system west of Pittsburgh, as well as forays in the West and Southwest. Scott's strategy differed greatly from Garrett's. The latter operated slowly and incrementally, concentrating on one area at a time, beginning with northern Virginia, and acquired his lines piece by piece. Scott scooped up as much as possible all at once. To accomplish this feat, in 1871, Scott, along with a group of Pennsylvania Railroad officers and his investor allies, set up one of the country's first holding companies, the Southern Railway Security Company, which existed simply to own enough stock to control Scott's targeted conquests. Working through a mixed collection of local investors and politicians, within two years the Southern Railway Security Company assembled a 2,131-mile system, consisting of thirteen railroads radiating from Richmond to Atlanta and Augusta, Georgia, and to Charleston, South Carolina. Along the way, the route of one of its components passed through Danville, Virginia, effectively blocking Garrett from extending farther south from there.⁴³

While not directly a part of Scott's strategy or under the Southern Railway Security Company's umbrella, an allied group had put together a system reaching from Richmond and Norfolk, Virginia, southeast along the Atlantic coast. Another Baltimorean, banker William T. Walters, who lived a stone's throw from Garrett on Mount Vernon Place, and his partner, Benjamin F. Newcomb—both of them close Scott friends and Southern Railway Security Company investors—ultimately assembled a network of lines extending from Richmond to Charleston, South Carolina, and Augusta, Georgia. Their system, later named the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, worked directly with the Pennsylvania Railroad in funneling southeastern traffic through Richmond and Washington, DC. Walters's railroad dealings not only created a strong Southern rail system, but also provided the fortune to establish a sizable art collection.⁴⁴

In addition to being stopped at Danville by the Scott-inspired Southern Railway Security Company, Garrett's hoped-for route into the South through the Shenandoah Valley also came to naught, thanks to another enemy, this time the feisty former Confederate major general William Mahone, a powerful political presence in Virginia. The slim, bantam-sized Mahone (he was 5'6" tall and entered the war weighing 100 pounds) actively agitated for Southern commercial independence from Northern control and viewed the B&O's presence in his state as another "Yankee invasion."⁴⁵

After the war, Mahone began developing a Norfolk-based east–west rail system that, by 1867, extended as far west as Lynchburg, where it met the Virginia and Ten-

nessee Railroad's line to Bristol (a town straddling the Virginia-Tennessee border), the same company Garrett intended his Valley Railroad to connect to at Salem, Virginia. Mahone believed that Garrett and the B&O diverted too much Virginia traffic to Baltimore. He was no friend of the Pennsylvania Railroad, either, but happily took advice from J. Edgar Thomson on how to keep the V&T out of Garrett's hands. A fight ensued between Garrett and Mahone to purchase the Commonwealth of Virginia's 60 percent controlling-stock interest in the V&T. After a lengthy, seesawing political wrangle, which Garrett at one point came close to winning, Mahone finally got his way. In November 1870, Mahone took over the V&T as a part of his newly merged Atlantic, Mississippi, and Ohio Railroad. After that, for all practical purposes, Garrett's Shenandoah Valley project had no place to go.⁴⁶

In the end, Garrett's determination to extend the B&O into the South eventually got blocked on both routes: at Danville, on the Piedmont route, by Tom Scott; and before reaching Salem, on the Shenandoah Valley route, by General Mahone. Garrett had put considerable capital and energy into the last leg of the project to Salem; the grading had been done, but it never saw any tracks. Although the Southern ventures did not rank as part of Garrett's permanent legacy—unlike his other accomplishments in the 1870s—they reflected his determination to expand the B&O to new markets and, hopefully, strengthen the financial health of the war-battered company in the postwar years.

Both Garrett and the Pennsylvania Railroad eventually abandoned their Southern ambitions. By the 1880s, both companies had liquidated their Southern investments and written off the whole affair as a pair of mutual misadventures. In retrospect, their nascent Southern empires might have fallen through their own weight anyway. The terrible physical shape and enormous capital needs of the Southern rail system after the Civil War required far more funding and political maneuvering, which neither the B&O nor the Pennsylvania Railroad could afford.

Of the two contenders, Garrett was the bigger loser. As a result of the Pennsylvania Railroad's tactics, the B&O's ability to handle Southern traffic remained severely handicapped until after the turn of the twentieth century, while the Pennsylvania Railroad maintained and enhanced its leading position in north-south traffic flows through Washington, DC—including virtually all of the passenger business.⁴⁷ Within a few years of the end of the Civil War, the Pennsylvania Railroad enjoyed dominance along the entire East Coast, in "an unbroken railroad from our terminus in New York, from Philadelphia, and from Baltimore, to all points of importance in the South Atlantic and Gulf States," its 1871 *Annual Report* boasted, adding that its rail line promoted "internal commerce between the North and the South."⁴⁸

The Valley Railroad was left uncompleted and lapsed into a backwater branch line that ultimately led only as far south as Lexington, Virginia. Garrett continued

to dote on the Valley Railroad, carefully controlling his son Robert's managerial missteps and still hoping to make something of the project. A decade later, in the 1883 *Annual Report*, Garrett remained optimistic, reporting that the Valley Railroad's line "will lead to much closer relations and will extend intercourse between the important region traversed and Baltimore, both in passenger and freight."⁴⁹

As importantly, Garrett wanted to personally ensure that Lee's short academic career in the remote town of Lexington, Virginia, would not be forgotten. In a letter to Lee's successor as college president, Garrett wrote, "It will be a great pleasure to carry out the wishes of my honored friend as well as to promote the interests of the university."⁵⁰ Garrett's friendship with his "honored friend" had started twenty years earlier in Baltimore, been interrupted by a savage war as the two men battled each other, and resumed after Lee's surrender, when personal, longtime loyalties prevailed.

The Czar of Maryland

1866–1873

WHILE HIS RAILROAD GAMBLING did not always pay off, Garrett could be certain of two things: his rising national stature and, not least, his increasing fortune. By 1866, Garrett and the family-owned RG&S collectively owned 14,500 shares of B&O stock, valued at \$2 million.¹ Through the ups and downs, the man who had taken over the B&O presidency in 1858 to represent the interests of the private stockholders never broke his promise. He made sure the B&O paid out lucrative dividends—no matter what the true bottom line indicated. And, as one of the largest stockholders, he greatly benefited from his corporate largess.

Garrett rose to become the most powerful man in his state. “I am sure no man living in Maryland in my time exercised so much an influence, or during a period of ten or twenty years held more undisputed sway over so many of his fellow citizens,” William Keyser recalled of his boss.² Although referred to as “the czar of Maryland,” Garrett’s reputation began to extend nationally.³ West Virginia named a volunteer militia, Garrett’s Rifles, after the man who had advocated for West Virginia’s statehood in 1863 and kept the B&O running through the state during the turbulence of the Civil War. A brand of cigars was named in his honor, as was Garrett, Indiana, and Garrett, Pennsylvania, both on B&O main lines.

Having once again publicly aligned himself with the Democratic party, many in the region considered Garrett for the party’s presidential ticket. The *Parkersburg Gazette* featured an article promoting “John W. Garrett for President.”⁴ The *Cumberland Daily Times* endorsed Garrett for the US Senate, stating “the simple fact that Mr. Garrett is a staunch Democrat whose business cares as President of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad have alone prevented him from becoming conspicuous in politics.” The paper reasoned, “The railroad interests of Maryland demand that our state should have a railroad man in the Senate.”⁵ Garrett balked at both ideas; he hated politics, Keyser insisted, except when manipulating politicians to get his way.⁶

In 1872, the Maryland General Assembly renamed the westernmost region of the state Garrett County. Judge Patrick Hamill, along with several other enthusiasts, led the effort to create a county in Garrett's honor. "I am deeply honored by the action of your citizens and appreciate their congratulations," Garrett wrote to Hamill. "I anticipate that additional capital will be attracted to your fine region and that your mineral, manufacturing, and agricultural interests will be rapidly developed and advanced."⁷ Increased B&O traffic and revenue to the county no doubt added to Garrett's enthusiasm for the accolade.

But the honor did not come without controversy. Perhaps in his eagerness to have a county named after him, Garrett might have promised too much—or made commitments he never meant to fulfill. In 1875, three years after the establishment of Garrett County, a storm erupted when several prominent citizens sent a letter to Garrett demanding to know what had become of his assertion, made "during the campaign for and against the new county in which you pledged yourself to the completion of a rail road from Confluence, Pennsylvania, and Oakland, Maryland, within *two years* after the formation of Garrett County." The petitioners claimed that Judge Hamill had received a letter from Garrett, assuring him that the line would be built. "There are hundreds of living witnesses that this and similar inducements were held out to the voters," the petitioners claimed.⁸ Two days later, Garrett fired off a terse reply, asserting that "I certainly never wrote a letter in which I pledged the completion of a railroad from Confluence to Oakland, or indeed ever made any promise, orally or otherwise, as to the construction of such a road."⁹ Garrett demanded to see proof of the letter in question; when none was forthcoming, the accusations faded.

Despite the disagreeable controversy, Garrett took a personal interest in his namesake county, hoping to bring to it not only economic development, but cultural advancement, as well. In 1875, a group of residents formed the Garrett County Literary Society and sent Garrett a list of 180 books and magazine subscriptions they wanted for a new library in Oakland. Garrett would have been familiar with many of the titles, which included the classics, ancient and natural history, art, archeology, the sciences, world religions—all subjects he enthusiastically had studied in adolescence and continued to follow—as well as sports and the popular writers of the day: Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, and Mark Twain. The society also wanted a copy of *The Women's Record: Sketches of All Distinguished Women from Creation to A.D. 1854*, written by the highly influential and popular editor Sarah Josepha Hale. The price of the books ranged from twenty-five cents to \$12, the latter for an art book, *Angels and Raphael*. Garrett's secretary, Edward Potts, instructed by Garrett to agree only to discounted prices, handled the transactions with New York publishers.¹⁰ After the books had been sent to the library, Potts wrote to the literary society, "Mr. Garrett instructs me to say he is much gratified to see the desire evinced for

intellectual culture,” adding that Garrett thought the list “displayed excellent judgment.”¹¹

Garrett’s visibility extended far beyond Maryland. After the war, his national prestige rose—as did his efforts to polish his public image. Now fully aware of his importance to Lincoln and the Union and his rising national stature, he began to document his integral involvement in the Civil War, keeping careful track of publicized accounts of his war years and railroad presidency. In 1871, a periodical—whose name left no uncertainty as to its mission—*Leisure Hours: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to History, Biography, Prose, Poetry, Wit, Romance, Reality, and Useful Information*—rendered a glowing report of Garrett and his actions during the war, a not uncommon occurrence, since famous men often paid to be included in prestigious publications. But the magazine erred in quoting Garrett’s salary as a princely \$10,000 a year. Garrett demanded a correction to reflect his \$4,000 annual salary, which, he pointed out, had not changed since he took office in 1858.¹² From then on, he insisted on editing all future publications and approving photographs or images.

After Edwin Stanton’s death in 1869, Garrett asked an intermediary, W. B. Bernard, to meet with Albert Johnson, the war secretary’s “confidential clerk,” to ascertain how he—Garrett—had been described in Stanton’s correspondence. Johnson assured Garrett that the “very voluminous correspondence between you and the Secretary” was not only positive, but highly flattering.¹³ “His recollections of many scenes in which you were a rather prominent actor, is vivid,” Johnson wrote, including the “momentous night” of September 23, 1863, when Stanton, Garrett, and top military generals and railroad officials urgently planned the great troop movement.¹⁴ Johnson stated that Garrett “was the only man that Mr. Stanton never refused to see, never kept waiting, and never contradicted in his usual brusque manner.”¹⁵

In his attempts to control his public image, did Garrett dream of high political office, even if he so often had coyly demurred? He did contemplate writing a memoir. Perhaps his wartime record might catapult him to political heights, such as those Ulysses S. Grant had attained in his election as the nation’s president three years after the war. Bernard insisted that Garrett’s own record “would make a publication inferior to none, and if well done, *superior to all* the War Department publications I have seen.”¹⁶

Garrett stepped up his efforts to burnish his wartime image—in particular, one important photograph. Looking back to one of the most memorable and pivotal events of the war, the Battle of Antietam, Garrett decided to alter the photograph Alexander Gardner had taken of Lincoln, McClellan, and the general’s staff in October 1862. In the photo, Garrett is positioned at the far right-hand end, which excluded him from the more widely circulated, cropped photos.¹⁷ In 1871, or possibly a few years later, Garrett commissioned Baltimore photographer Daniel Bendann to

use a new photographic technique to manipulate the image by cutting out the middle men and inserting Garrett's image next to Lincoln and McClellan.¹⁸ How widely this photograph was made public is not known, but had Garrett run for political office, the image—standing next to the president after one of the most decisive battles of the war—would have reaffirmed his leadership, power, and capabilities.

Acknowledging his ascendancy, Garrett began buying prestigious and historic properties for his family. The vast fortunes of the Gilded Age tycoons, combined with their competitive drive, meant that they could not only imitate the grand palaces of European nobility, but also far exceed them in aristocratic elegance—and expenditures. American moguls competed with each other as much with their private domains as with their industries. The second generation of Vanderbilts set the gold standard with their lavish New York City mansion at 57th Street and Fifth Avenue, the first of ten elaborate Fifth Avenue dwellings the family would build over the next decades and just one of the many extravagant Vanderbilt properties that would embellish the East Coast. Jay Gould had his Gothic manse, Lyndhurst, overlooking the Hudson River. "Diamond Jim" Fisk built a four-story mansion in Boston for Mrs. Fisk and kept his mistress, the voluptuous Miss Mansfield, showcased in a luxurious residence in New York City, a few doors away from Fisk's office. In contrast, J. Edgar Thomson avoided the ostentatious lifestyle of his peers, choosing to live modestly in a townhouse in Philadelphia's sedate Rittenhouse Square and summering at his nearby country childhood home, Pennsdale. Although he had built the vast Pennsylvania Railroad system, he preferred to be viewed as a professional manager, not a magnate.

Garrett was not about to be left behind in the real estate race. During the war, he moved his family from Baltimore's Franklin Square to a Federal style, three-story townhouse at 50 (now 12) East Mount Vernon Place, next to "Brownstone Row."¹⁹ Mount Vernon Place now ranked as the city's most desirable and aristocratic neighborhood. Four small parks, in the form of a Greek cross, converged at the foot of the 178-foot monument Baltimoreans first planned in 1815 and completed in 1829 to honor George Washington. "The Washington column is one of the best specimens of that kind of building I have ever seen," a visitor to Baltimore observed, adding that "a few printed words on a board hung on the railing entreated that this monument may not be spat upon or injured."²⁰

Fashionable mansions surrounded the gated park, which ensured exclusivity for its residents. Mount Vernon Place showcased the country's most stylish architects, who created mansions in the fashionable Italian, Greek, or Renaissance Revival styles popular among wealthy industrialists. The distinguished locale, a mile north and worlds away from the ramshackle workers' houses and sprawling, malodorous warehouses and waters of Baltimore's busy harbor, replicated European manor

living at its finest—and much impressed visitors. “The portion of town inhabited by the wealthy classes has a more solid and lasting appearance than in the other Atlantic cities; the private homes are very good,” Eliot Warburton, a noted Irish travel writer, opined about Mount Vernon’s elegant sophistication. Other foreign commentators concurred. “One felt thankful so quiet a place is to be found in the same country which contains New York and Chicago,” an Englishman pronounced in *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine*.²¹

Some of Baltimore’s most notable citizens resided in Mount Vernon Place: William Walters, Enoch Pratt, Dr. Henry Hanson, and William Tiffany, cousin of the famed New York Tiffanys. Johns Hopkins lived a few blocks away, on Saratoga Street. Many Mount Vernon residents spent but a few short months in Baltimore, usually for the winter social season. In summer, they could be found at their country homes outside of Baltimore or in Newport, Rhode Island, or traveling the world. The Garretts were no different. After the war, Garrett and his extended family continued their prewar tradition of gathering at their favorite watering holes. They packed up for leisurely stays at the family farm at Lansdowne or their new chosen frolicking spot, New York City’s Brevoort Hotel, an upscale establishment on Fifth Avenue near Greenwich Village, known as “a quiet hotel with a restaurant of peculiar excellence.”²² Perhaps not coincidentally, the Brevoort also became a favored gathering place for other railroad presidents in the postwar years, when they held their periodic conferences to quell rate wars.

Patriarch Robert and his wife Elizabeth had been the first Garretts to purchase property on Mount Vernon Place. In 1856, they commissioned architect Louis L. Long to design a thirty-room Italianate brick mansion at the southwest corner of West Monument Street and Cathedral Street. When his parents were traveling that year, John Garrett sent them the architect’s renderings of the splendid building under construction, with Elizabeth responding enthusiastically that “we’ll soon be ready to move.”²³ It was almost finished when Robert died the following year. Owning such a magnificent home among the showplaces of Baltimore’s titans would have been the ultimate step for the 74-year-old Irish immigrant’s journey, the culmination of his rags-to-riches epic life story.

Forty-year-old Henry moved into the mansion with his widowed mother and unmarried sister, Elizabeth Barbara. In the prewar years, the family employed two white servants—a coachman from Prussia and a cook from Ireland—and a slave from Maryland, who served as a waiter.²⁴ The Garretts’ new home featured an imposing portico, supported by fluted Doric columns, and tall French windows, with a double flight of marble stairs converging at the front door. Inside, rich tapestries hung from the walls, handwoven Persian rugs covered the floors, and expensive furniture, brought to Baltimore from exotic locales, filled the rooms. It also offered

the latest conveniences: gas lighting and water closets. Heavy damask drapes shielded the residents from the unpleasantness of the outside world. The top floor housed the servants. In 1860, assessors valued the mansion at \$600,000; a B&O worker, in comparison, might spend \$1 a week for room and board.²⁵

After Henry's death in 1867, the John Garretts moved into the residence and soon turned it into one of Baltimore's showcases. In the 1870s, Garrett hired the New York architectural firm of McKim, Mead, and White, which would gain fame for the extraordinary Villard Houses in New York City, to add their sophisticated elegance to the Garretts' fashionable abode. "The plans and designs are from the McKim's celebrated studio in New York," a *Baltimore American* article explained to the curious. "Only the finest and costliest materials are being used . . . Italian statuary marble with columns and decorations of the finest bronze cast from designs of masters."²⁶

Louis Tiffany, Lockwood de Forest, and the interior designers the Herter Brothers also added their unique style of opulence to the mansion. In the Gilded Age, when all things Oriental captivated well-to-do Americans, de Forest, with his passion for Indian art, created one of his extraordinary "East Indian Rooms," with its intricate filigree and graceful arches. "Here one finds the most elaborate teak-wood carvings," a visitor to the Garrett's palatial residence noted. The exquisitely detailed panels and frescoes were crafted by "natives of Ahmedabad."²⁷ De Forest created only a few such decorative confections, numbering among them one for Chicago developer and retailer Potter Palmer and his wife, Bertha, Chicago's grande dame; and another for Chicago financier and William Howard Taft's secretary of the treasury, Franklin MacVeagh, and his wife Emily.

An Elegant Suburban Retreat

Garrett made his grandest real estate purchase in 1870–1871. At Hopkins's urging, he bought one of the state's most beloved and historic properties, Montebello, next to Hopkins's Clifton estate. With his magnificent manor in the bucolic countryside northeast of Baltimore, Garrett joined a prestigious list of landed gentry who built lavish country homes to escape the grimy city, where yellow fever and malaria epidemics too often swept through the crowded, narrow streets, killing thousands. Residents were vulnerable and helpless against unpredictable infectious disease outbreaks, despite the presence in downtown Baltimore of the country's fifth medical college, part of the University of Maryland. To escape the pestilence, as well as the city's semitropical heat and humidity, wealthy Baltimoreans built extravagant country residences outside the city, giving their properties names, such as Huntingdon and Coldstream. John King Jr., Garrett's cousin and the B&O's first vice president, owned a country estate, Chestnut Hill, adjacent to Montebello.

Montebello ranked as the jewel among the country getaways for Maryland's elite. Built by Battle of Baltimore hero Samuel Smith, it featured a fine home, with a fireplace of Italian marble and an exquisite oval dining room. It soon gained fame as "the loveliest old house in Maryland" and held great sentimentality among many Marylanders for its historic value.²⁸ Garrett expanded the estate, buying up adjacent parcels of land, including a second house, the Stirling mansion, built by prominent Baltimore lawyer Archibald Stirling. With its sprawling 1,400 acres—almost twice the size of New York City's newly created Central Park—the expanded Montebello grounds encompassed roughly 2.1 square miles. Its size required separate geographical descriptions: "Lower Montebello" included the Smith mansion, while the Stirling mansion was located in "Upper Montebello." In order to fully appreciate the enormity of Garrett's weekend retreat, one of the largest rural estates in the country, a visitor standing at one corner of the combined properties could walk 1.5 miles east and 1.5 miles north through "Garrett's Woods."²⁹ Garrett hired the Stirling mansion's original architect, Edmund Lind, to remodel the stately stucco manor into a rustic clapboard house, with a wide wraparound veranda.

Now John could finally unleash his love of farming and husbandry, first practiced at Lansdowne, on a grand scale. Alderney and Devon cattle and Southdown sheep lazily roamed the grounds of Montebello. "The greenhouse, grapery, and propagating house are all under one roof," the *Maryland Farmer* explained in an 1872 article, "and while it presents an artistic and beautiful appearance it is said to combine more of the late improvement as to form, mode of heating and supplying the water, etc., than any such building in the country."³⁰ To ensure that Garrett had the most exotic and interesting floral specimens, the commissioner of the US Department of Agriculture, Horace Capron, a former Civil War general and longtime friend of Garrett's, sent him "a choice selection of garden and flower seeds."³¹ In an era when fabulously wealthy tycoons were expected to beautify their environs, the *Maryland Farmer* asked rhetorically: "Can moneyed men apply a portion of their large capital to a better, more rational, more humanizing purpose than adorning their homesteads with beautiful flowers and trees and useful birds and fruits?"³² Garrett's daughter, Mary, loved to wander through Montebello's gardens, always with her journal in hand, ready to jot down a personal thought or observation.³³

Countless "moneyed men" enjoyed the beauty of Montebello's woods and meadows, gardens and flowers. The Garretts entertained "frequently and lavishly," the *Baltimore American* reported.³⁴ Visitors included financiers, industrialists, literati, members of Congress and Parliament, railroad presidents—at least those on good terms with Garrett—editors, and art collectors. Garrett had first developed an interest in art while in college and, as an adult, had immersed himself in the arts, creating a collection to fill his many homes. Philosopher Herbert Spencer, biologist

Thomas Huxley (grandfather of Aldous), William Corcoran, and General George McClellan often stayed at Montebello. Garrett's grand property greatly impressed another frequent guest, Andrew Carnegie, the "king of steel," who, since his earlier apprenticeship under Tom Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad, had become one of the richest men in the world. Carnegie knew a thing or two about great estates; he owned a 20,000-acre one, Skibo, in his native Scotland. In his autobiography, Carnegie recalled that Garrett "was one of the few Americans who lived then in the grand style of a country gentlemen, with many thousands of acres of beautiful land, parklike drives, a stud of Thoroughbred horses, with cattle, sheep, and dogs and a home that realized what one had read of the country life of a nobleman in England."³⁵

Montebello's huge stone "Arabian stables" housed Garrett's pride and joy: 150 internationally famous thoroughbreds. Mary wrote of galloping through Montebello's woods on one of her father's fine horses.³⁶ Nearby, Garrett built a racetrack to run his beautiful animals, and for many years he published an annual *Catalogue of Trotting Stock* from the "estate of John W. Garrett," detailing the pedigree of each horse. The catalogues ranged in length from thirty-six to forty pages. "The stock embraced in this catalogue were all bred and raised at Montebello," Garrett pledged in the last catalogue. Referring to his favorite sire, he stated they "are the first of the get of Maryland Volunteer offered to the public." Never missing an opportunity to turn a profit, he added, "They will be sold at reasonable prices."³⁷

In 1870, he boasted of Montebello to his friend Hugh J. Jewett, former Ohio congressman and, later, president of the Erie Railroad, who had just purchased a farm, Fair Oaks, in Zanesville, Ohio: "I, too, am quite a farmer and have quite a respectable farm."³⁸ Garrett also raised Shetland ponies, taking a special interest in crossbreeding the species with his Arabians. The offspring, according to his grandson and namesake, John Work Garrett, "had the form of the Arab horses, with thin bodies and legs, but were of medium height and had the Shetland pony coloring."³⁹ Garrett's genetic experiment lasted but a single generation, since the hybrids were sterile.

Luckily for Garrett, Montebello proved to be a fertile breeding ground for other species. His award-winning livestock served as a valuable commodity for exchanging goodwill and currying favor. Over the coming years, Garrett gave away or sold many of his prized animals to railroad colleagues or politicians. He sent Hugh Jewett "a splendid Southdown buck from the greatly celebrated flock of the late Geo. Patterson [and] an admirable Bull, Neptune, who was born on the steamer on the voyage from Liverpool to New York and was selected by Sir Curtis Lampson from the best stock in Great Britain."⁴⁰ Jewett returned the favor by sending Garrett two mastiff pups.⁴¹ Garrett also presented Jewett with a pair of delicate Rouen ducks, which Garrett boasted were "from imported French birds." By the time the wildfowl

reached Jewett's farm in Ohio, however, the description in the shipping manifest had demoted them to "Hong Kong geese."⁴²

On a visit to Montebello, Sarah Blakeslee Parker, wife of the Hon. Asa Parker—president of the Lehigh Valley Railroad, a congressman, and founder of Lehigh University—had taken a particular liking to Garrett's Berkshire pigs. Garrett soon sent her two offspring of a champion sow, which had been given to Garrett by John Walter, owner of the *London Times*. The prized piglets' journey from Maryland to Pennsylvania via the Adams Express required complicated logistics and much loving care from—as well as producing anxiety in—handlers along the way.⁴³ E. D. Standisford, president of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, received one of Garrett's blue-ribbon sheep, a Southdown buck.⁴⁴ Garrett also sent a Southdown sheep to his friend Samuel L. M. Barlow, a powerful New York corporate lawyer and Democratic operative, who had helped oust Jay Gould from the presidency of the Erie Railroad.⁴⁵ Garrett shipped financier A. J. Drexel, founder of Drexel Morgan & Company, and later Drexel University, a prized mare, Gilmare.⁴⁶

In 1872, a writer from the *Maryland Farmer* rhapsodized over the extravagance of Garrett's fine country estate—still just a work in progress—and practically was at a loss for words to describe all that he saw at "the elegant suburban retreat," with "rare plants in the conservatory," "abundant flowers flowing out from the terrace," and "the grapery in perfect order with fine specimens of European grapes." When away, Garrett pined for his country estate: "the woods, the meadows, the horses, the colts, the sheep, and the garden & the flowers."⁴⁷

Johns Hopkins, too, enjoyed the high life at his adjacent property, Clifton. Hopkins bought the abandoned, dilapidated estate and mansion at auction in 1840 and, by 1852, had expanded it to 500 acres, hiring architect John R. Niernsee to remodel the house into a magnificent three-story showplace—considered a prime example of architects' midcentury fascination with the Italianate villa style. One entire side of the palatial abode featured a ballroom where Hopkins—a confirmed bachelor and lapsed Quaker—could dance away the night with the rich and famous. Hopkins hired a Scottish gardener, who transformed the once-shabby estate into "the epitome of Victorian Fancy . . . a natural retreat where God's handiwork meshed with man's creativity for people to *recreate* themselves," according to the *Maryland Farmer* in 1872.⁴⁸ Passing through the gates of Clifton, guests entered a land of enchantment, with exotic plants, meandering paths, bridges, fountains, and more than a hundred statues. Hopkins "loved it," his grandniece Helen Hopkins Thom recalled. "The pure beauty of the scene satisfied a certain craving in the depths of his nature, a craving that had been bred and nurtured in the sunny fields of Anne Arundel [his boyhood home]."⁴⁹ Clifton was, as the *Maryland Farmer* pronounced, "a relaxing retreat for a busy merchant [that] offered an air of quiet repose."⁵⁰

After the war, not everyone in Maryland had the luxury of enjoying quiet repose in the countryside. Reconstruction—the federal government’s attempt to repatriate the eleven seceding Southern states and rebuild the South’s demolished economy—could be felt throughout Maryland, although not nearly as acutely as in the Deep South. On February 3, 1870, Congress ratified the Fifteenth Amendment, the last of the “Reconstruction Amendments,” giving black men, many of them former slaves, the right to vote. Celebrations were held throughout the country, but Baltimore’s counted as the nation’s largest—which was ironic, considering many Baltimoreans’ pro-secessionist sentiments. In addition to hearing grand speeches, more than 20,000 celebrants triumphantly paraded through Mount Vernon Place, where many of the participants had been enslaved just years before. The procession marched in front of the Garrett mansion at 101 West Monument Street and was captured in a widely publicized lithograph “The Result of the Fifteenth Amendment,” produced by the Baltimore firm of Metcalf and Clark.

The glorious event belied the fact that Maryland was not among the required three-fourths of the states (twenty-eight at that time) that ratified the Fifteenth Amendment.⁵¹ Although some of the amendment’s staunchest supporters came from Maryland, many Democrats worked behind the scenes to defeat the amendment in the state’s General Assembly. One obstructionist, J. Montgomery Peters, a delegate to Maryland’s 1867 constitutional convention to debate the Fifteenth Amendment, sought Garrett’s aid to help derail the amendment and, should it pass in Congress, to influence President Ulysses S. Grant to not sign it into law. Peters wrote a pamphlet outlining the dangerous precedent he thought the amendment would set and asked Garrett to give it to Grant. In a letter to Garrett in July 1869, Peters stated, “Every state in this Union would be a million times better off by *voluntary action* to confer the rights of suffrage on the negro rather than allow Congress under the pretense of giving the rights of suffrage to take control of all future elections, as they will do.” Hoping to spur Garrett into action, Peters added, “Every rail road corporation, *especially* South and West, has a deep *vital* interest in seeing that this amendment is not ratified.”⁵² Unmoved by such threats, Garrett remained apolitical in this debate and focused his lobbying activities on advancing the business of the B&O. Maryland ratified the Fifteenth Amendment a century later, on May 7, 1973, one of the last three states to do so.

Noblesse Oblige

While Garrett put much energy into stimulating Baltimore’s postwar economy and commerce, rebuilding Baltimore also meant doing good deeds for his community. Now a man of vast wealth, power, and influence, he shared his fortune by contribut-

ing liberally to civic causes, the noblesse oblige of charitable and cultural benevolence expected of all upper-class Americans during that period, in addition to being a family tradition started by his parents. Garrett's philanthropy represented the tidal wave of private giving throughout the nation that transformed American cultural, educational, and charitable institutions in the last decades of the nineteenth century.

Baltimore's Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) ranked as Garrett's favorite organization. The YMCA movement had started in London in 1844 to help give moral Christian grounding and vocational skills to young men coming into urban areas for work and, as importantly, to steer them away from "the theater, the saloon, the ballroom, the gaming table, and prostitutes, whose 'feet go down to death, and whose steps take hold on hell.'" ⁵³ The idea soon crossed the Atlantic. Garrett eagerly endorsed the mission of the organization, which first opened its doors in Baltimore in 1852, in the Lombard Street Lutheran Church. In 1857, he contributed \$10,000, as did Johns Hopkins, to erect a new building—the first YMCA building in the United States—and over the years continued to send fundraising letters to friends and colleagues to help support the movement. ⁵⁴ In a speech Garrett gave several years later, he proudly spoke of the success of Baltimore's YMCA since its founding: "505,000 visitors to the building, 2,000 men who had availed themselves of the gymnasium, 3,000 who had attended class in German, philology, elocution, and 2,394 association meetings." ⁵⁵ With the same educational mission for young men in mind, in 1869 Garrett also established a library for B&O apprentices at the Mount Clare Shops. ⁵⁶

Garrett's interest in husbandry extended to the Baltimore Zoo. American zoos no longer focused on freak shows of human and animal displays, but instead were becoming beautiful parks and fashionable attractions in urban areas for educational and conservation purposes. Garrett made sure his city had the best specimens in its zoo. The King of Italy, Umberto I, presented Garrett with four camels, two males and two females, "raised by the King from excellent stock which long has been in the possession of the Royal Family." ⁵⁷ Garrett corresponded with a Signore Peruzzi in Florence, Italy, about shipping the camels "for our beautiful Druid Hill Park, which is a magnificent property of 900 acres." He hoped "the beasts will be successfully propagated & prove to be of great interest to the many thousands of visitors & strangers at the park." ⁵⁸

The camels did not arrive without drama. The Italian steamer *Independente* ran aground off Long Island and the animals were forced to swim to shore. Stunned bystanders watched the scene unfold, "surprised that the camels could swim." Baltimoreans followed the dromedaries' dramatic voyage in the daily papers, breathing a collective sigh of relief when the fate of the exotic beasts was known. "The

Dromedaries Safe: A Rescue from Great Peril,” the *Baltimore Sun* heralded after their ship finally sailed into Locust Point.⁵⁹ For the formal presentation of the camels on September 22, 1883, Garrett published a pamphlet with the correspondence between himself and Umberto I. As a thank-you for the four nearly drowned dromedaries, Garrett presented his favorite Arabian mare, Saida, to the king.⁶⁰

Garrett also gave generously, often anonymously, to clinics and almshouses during the city’s many outbreaks of infectious diseases, and he frequently contributed \$3,000–\$4,000 to his mother’s favorite charity, the Society for the Relief of the Indigent Sick. Elizabeth, too, continued her support, often giving \$1,000 annually to the charity she had started forty-eight years earlier.⁶¹ Garrett commissioned decorative statuary to beautify Baltimore’s landscapes, donated land for a school in Oakland in Western Maryland, and started an employee lecture series at the Mount Clare Shops, where professors presented lectures that were then “published in pamphlet form for distribution among those who were unable to attend.”⁶² He supported higher education, sending generous contributions to William and Mary College and Washington and Lee College. As one of Lafayette College’s most famed alumni, he often was asked to fill the school’s coffers. Knowing Garrett’s love of antiquities, the college’s president, William Cassidy Cattell, asked him to buy “a valuable Hieratic collection of papyrus, tablets, and eagles,” explaining that “every Lafayette student will be glad to know that we had something of such value.”⁶³ Soon, a check for \$500 from RG&S ensured a place for the Egyptian artifacts at the college.⁶⁴

Garrett took notice of the struggling Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, bequeathed to the nation in 1835 with a handsome endowment of nearly \$500,000 from British scientist James Smithson. The facility soon earned the reputation as one of the world’s great repositories of cultural artifacts and scientific research. The Smithsonian became one of Garrett’s pet projects, and the financial plight of its first director, Joseph Henry, was of great concern him. Garrett led a fundraising campaign to subsidize Henry’s modest annual salary and enrich the coffers of the institution. With the generous donations of nearly twenty prominent business leaders—the Drexels and Morgans, Cyrus McCormick, Isa Packer, and Alex Brown, among others—the fund reached \$40,000. Overwhelmed, Henry wrote to Garrett of his appreciation for the “pecuniary testimonial . . . intended to give comfort to me and my family and to advance the cause of science.”⁶⁵ The Joseph Henry Endowment paid out \$2,400 annually to Henry and to his future survivors.

In addition, Garrett took a personal interest in providing scholarships to orphaned children of his friends.⁶⁶ One in particular, the son of Charles Wells Russell, a former Virginia state legislator and member of the Congress of the Confederacy, received tuition for four years at the “College of Georgetown” in Washington, DC. In 1871, Garrett gave \$23,000 to the debt-ridden Grand Lodge of the A. F. and A. Masons of

Maryland to “save the temple from the hammer.”⁶⁷ Although John Garrett was not a Freemason, Henry had been active in the lodge, and John memorialized his brother with a substantial gift. He lavished support on the family’s longtime Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, which had given much spiritual guidance both to his father, a generation earlier, and to Henry. John Garrett could be seen sitting in his favorite pew, often accompanied by his out-of-town guests, George Peabody and Junius Morgan and his son, J. Pierpont Morgan.

Although Garrett’s philanthropy demonstrated great generosity and wide-ranging interests, two of his closest friends, George Peabody and Johns Hopkins, would set the standard for American philanthropy in the nineteenth century and establish models for future charitable giving. Garrett would be instrumental in the future success of both of his friends’ great enterprises. In the thirty years since George Peabody had decamped from Baltimore to London in 1837 to establish a financial house to represent American businesses in Europe, he had become spectacularly successful, respected—and very rich. He had “a prophetic eye” and could spot a business opportunity long before his competitors even knew it existed.⁶⁸ He had been considered for secretary of the treasury during the Andrew Johnson’s presidency and also as a future presidential candidate, “a kind and complimentary reference,” Peabody wrote, but one that he declined.⁶⁹ He was held in equal admiration in England, arriving when that country was in its ascendancy, as was the beautiful young Victoria, who had just been crowned queen at age 18. He soon became one of the monarch’s favorites.

After amassing one of the largest of the midcentury fortunes—an estimated \$10 million by the mid-1860s—Peabody retired, turning over his London business and the company’s name to Junius Morgan. Peabody soon started a second, even more remarkable career in giving away his accumulated wealth, earning a reputation as the “father of modern philanthropy.”⁷⁰ He gave his money not as a bequest—as was traditional—but while he was alive and could see his chosen charities prosper. From the Southern Education Fund to help impoverished children of the former Confederacy to the Peabody Museum of Archeology at Harvard, he established a range of innovative organizations on both sides of the Atlantic. But he saved his most notable philanthropy for Baltimore, the city that had launched his successful career. Having lived in cosmopolitan London for decades, he often had talked with young Americans traveling abroad, who bemoaned the dearth of cultural organizations in the United States and resorted to travel in Europe for enrichment. Using the same “prophetic eye” that had served him well in business, Peabody recognized an opportunity to start a revolution—a cultural revolution—in the United States.

On February 12, 1857, while in Baltimore, he formally established an institute in his name for “the moral and intellectual culture of the inhabitants of Baltimore and

collaterally to those of the State; and, also, toward the enlargement and diffusion of a taste for the Fine Arts.” Putting aside his concerns that the Panic of 1857 might bankrupt his company, Peabody followed through with his plan for his cultural institute. Rather than presiding over its formation himself, Peabody instead appointed Garrett and twenty-four respected Maryland leaders to form a board of trustees to conceptualize and implement the plan. He turned over \$300,000—an amount that soon would increase to \$1.2 million—to the trustees to lay “the foundation, organization, and management of the proposed institute,” which would include a library, an art gallery, academic courses, and prizes for school children.⁷¹ The sparkling white marble building of the Peabody Institute, sitting grandly on Mount Vernon Place, was completed in 1861, but the war had prevented its dedication.

The gala opening was well worth the wait. On October 25, 1866, handsome, silver-haired, 71-year-old Peabody, the world’s most famous philanthropist, returned to Baltimore for the event. Garrett had sent his palace car to New York to transport Peabody after the institute’s founder disembarked from London. Thousands of eager onlookers crowded onto Mount Vernon Place for the festivities. With the nation still divided and the bloody battles of the Civil War remaining fresh in memory, in his speech Peabody expressed his hope that the institute would “be a common ground, where all may meet, burying forever the differences and animosities, forgetting past separations and estrangements.”⁷²

Over the years, Garrett took an active role in the administration of the Peabody Institute, particularly the art department, reflecting his love of classical art, which was first nurtured at Lafayette College. He gave \$15,000 to purchase statuary for the institute’s art gallery. The *Baltimore American* noted that the institute was “indebted [to Garrett] for one of its most valuable possessions—a collection of the casts of the great Roman and Greek statues of antiquity, together with casts of the friezes of the Parthenon and a copy of Ghiberti’s bronze Gates of Paradise in Florence.”⁷³ Garrett paid \$10,000 for them.

On several occasions during his trip to Baltimore for the institute’s inauguration, Peabody stayed with the Garretts at their Baltimore and Deer Park homes.⁷⁴ During one of these visits, Garrett asked for Peabody’s assistance on a personal matter. Garrett had long been concerned that his friend and business associate Johns Hopkins, who was on his way to amassing an \$8 million fortune, had not written a will. Peabody and Hopkins had briefly met in 1856, with Peabody once stating that Hopkins “was the only man in all my experience more thoroughly anxious to make money and more determined to succeed than myself.”

Garrett asked Peabody to advise Hopkins on a means of putting his fortune to good use. Garrett invited Hopkins for dinner and later recalled the details of the evening: “After my family left the table at 8 o’clock, I introduced the subject and the

conference continued until an hour past midnight. The conversation was remarkable.⁷⁵ Peabody told Hopkins that “there was a higher pleasure and a greater happiness than accumulating money and that was derived from giving it for good and humane purposes.” To initiate the new Peabody Institute, the philanthropist explained that he had “called a number of my friends and proposed that they should act as my trustees.”⁷⁶ Not long after that fateful meeting, Hopkins took Peabody’s advice and wrote a will, dividing his fortune equally to fund a university and a hospital that, upon his death, would bear his name. Hopkins, too, appointed a founding board of trustees, Garrett among them, to implement his plan.

Hopkins and Peabody continued the friendship encouraged through their mutual friend, Garrett. In 1869, they joined Robert E. Lee and banker-philanthropist William Corcoran (who that year established his own art museum and college in Washington, DC) at the “Old White” resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, now famed as the Greenbrier. Garrett worried about Peabody’s and Hopkins’s declining health and corresponded regularly with both.⁷⁷ He sent his palace car to transport his friends to and from the Old White and arranged for a local physician, Dr. Van Bibber, to attend them while they were there. Garrett asked Corcoran to reserve “two comfortable rooms in ‘Baltimore Row’” for Hopkins and the doctor, explaining that “because of Hopkins’ condition of health, he cannot venture to go out without having a comfortable room secured.”⁷⁸ Rachel, too, wanted to be of help, with Garrett writing to Peabody, “Mrs. Garrett avails herself of a convenient opportunity to send you some Alderney butter from her dairy, which I suppose is of a better quality than you can get at the Springs.”⁷⁹

Peabody then returned to London, where he died in November 1869 at the age of 74. “The death of the noted philanthropist has created a profound sensation,” the *New York Times* stated.⁸⁰ Although Peabody had indicated that he wanted to be buried in Massachusetts, his greatest admirer, Queen Victoria, ordered a temporary burial at Westminster Abbey. Peabody’s remains were transported across the Atlantic with great pomp and ceremony aboard the *HMS Monarch*. Garrett lobbied James Tinker, one of Peabody’s New York attorneys, to hold a funeral service in Baltimore, “at which the President of the United States and other officers of the government should be present and similar solemnities should be held in New York and Boston.”⁸¹ But a fierce winter storm prevented an elaborate funeral itinerary, and in February 1870, Peabody was interred in his hometown. Robert E. Lee wanted to attend the service, but concern about lingering anti-Confederate feelings in Massachusetts forced him to change his plans.

Garrett extended his personal attention in the war’s aftermath not only to friends, but also to former adversaries. As Thaddeus Stevens’s health declined precipitously in early August 1868 and he became too ill to travel, Garrett offered the services of his

palace car to take the powerful chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, who in 1868 had opposed Garrett on the “air line” bill, from Washington, DC, to his home in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. “It gives me great pleasure to furnish every practical facility to ensure your comfort upon your homeward journey,” Garrett reassured him on August 3, adding, “I have arranged that the street shall be clear in Baltimore and a servant will accompany you through Lancaster.”⁸² Stevens died eight days later at his home in Washington, however.

The Next Generation

While Robert II continued his presidency of the Valley Railroad and Harry headed RG&S, both sons remained under the watchful eye of their father. The family firm continued its longtime association with the Morgans, both in New York and London, consulting with Junius Morgan, now running Peabody’s business in London, about opportunities in mining and importing ore from Chile. When the Drexel and Morgan families merged interests to establish a business bearing their names, Drexel Morgan & Company became the primary business correspondent of RG&S. The wealth to be made by brokers such as RG&S and the Morgans in international finance at this time seemed limitless—almost unfathomable. Europeans owned over a billion dollars of US government bonds and nearly half a billion dollars in American corporate securities.⁸³

The business deals between RG&S and the B&O became even more blurred than in the prewar days, when RG&S had either financed or arranged financing for the B&O’s expansion westward. Both companies enjoyed mutually beneficial and profitable arrangements, and John W. Garrett, who had the most to gain, stayed integral to all business decisions between the two companies. He “remained at the head of the banking house,” the *New York Times* noted.⁸⁴ After the war, RG&S still depended on the bread-and-butter business of the prewar days—transporting corn, coffee, and sugar by land and sea—but by the late 1860s, the company became a broker for exporting crude oil, an increasingly important commodity, brought from western Virginia on B&O trains. Within the first year, the firm exported fifty-two million gallons.⁸⁵ RG&S also invested in the Bank of Annapolis and the Consolidation Coal Company in Western Maryland, and Harry and Robert II served as trustees of the world’s largest producer of cotton sail duck (sailcloth), the Mount Vernon Manufacturing Company in Baltimore’s thriving mill region, Jones Falls. RG&S still owned the Eutaw and Howard House Hotels, but added to their real estate portfolio by buying land in Virginia and Pennsylvania and, notably, 5,000 acres in Western Maryland for possible future development.

Garrett made major changes at RG&S, moving the office from its longtime location on Fayette Street to 7 South Street, in the heart of Baltimore's emerging financial district. The firm also stepped up the advertising for its services: "Make advances on collaterals. Deal in sterling exchange. Allow interest on deposits. Make collections. Negotiate railway and other loans on commercial paper. Buy and sell stocks and bonds on commissions."⁸⁶

Garrett made sure Robert II and Harry, now his protégés and no longer his miscreant adolescent sons, mingled with the most famous and visible—and sometimes notorious—business crowd. In their first years after joining the family firm, the sons arranged to sell bonds to financier August Belmont Sr., who became a Democratic Party operative, and financier Jay Gould, a railroad magnate-turned-gold speculator. Harry and Robert also handled the business affairs of Baltimorean Elizabeth "Betsy" Bonaparte, daughter of a B&O founder, William Patterson. Elizabeth had the misfortune of marrying Napoleon I's brother Jerome and living to regret it after the emperor annulled the marriage and banished the young wife from the royal family. She got even, however, dying a multimillionaire in 1879, at the age of 94. Garrett introduced his sons to his friends: former Union commander-in-chief Ulysses S. Grant, who was elected to the presidency in 1868; Carl Shurz, former Union general, secretary of the interior, and the first German American elected to the US Senate; and William Cullen Bryant, poet, abolitionist, and influential editor of the *New York Daily Post*, one of the nation's oldest and most widely circulated newspapers.

Just two generations removed from their immigrant grandfather's modest trading company, Robert II and Harry married into wealthy, patrician families, solidifying the Garretts' status among the East Coast aristocracy. In 1870, Harry, a quiet, handsome, serious-minded 21-year-old, married 18-year-old Alice Whitridge, who hailed from a wealthy Rhode Island clan that had made a fortune in shipping. Before moving to Baltimore, Alice's family lived in Newport at their elegant Tiverton estate, named for a twelfth-century castle built by Henry I. In their first years of marriage, Harry and Alice lived in the Smith mansion in Lower Montebello. In 1878, Garrett purchased one of Baltimore's architectural gems for the couple: Evergreen. The two-and-a-half story, twelve-room Italianate mansion, with its four stately Corinthian columns, sat elegantly atop a spacious lawn north of downtown Baltimore. Down a slight hill toward the back, the two-story stables housed the horses and fine broughams used to transport the family. Over the years, Harry and Alice expanded the mansion several times over, eventually adding a gymnasium and schoolrooms for their growing family. But the appropriately named "gold bathroom" ranked as the epitome of Gilded Age extravagance and Evergreen's most famous accouter-

ment, with its shutters, tank, and commode covered in twenty-three-carat gold leaf. It cost \$2,360, with one guest noting, “The bathroom is so bright King Midas would be jealous.”⁸⁷ After Harry and Alice moved from the Smith mansion, the historic, much revered building remained vacant, fell into disrepair, and eventually was razed.

In 1872, Robert II made an equally excellent match, marrying Mary Sloan Frick, daughter of the well-connected Baltimore Fricks, in one of the city’s grandest weddings that year. The bride, as was the case with Alice Whitridge, could trace her pedigree back to pre-Revolutionary public figures. The newlyweds did not lack for wedding gifts. The Fricks presented the couple with Uplands, the family’s ancestral estate in Baltimore County, where Mary Frick had been raised. Not to be undone, John Garrett bought the couple a townhouse at 11 Mount Vernon Place.⁸⁸ Over the years, as Mary Frick hoped to outdo the Astors and Vanderbilts, that simple townhouse eventually would encompass the townhouses on either side and be expanded into a 40,000-square-foot mansion that rivaled the most opulent of New York’s famed brownstones. Its purchase marked the third property owned by the Garretts on fashionable Mount Vernon Square.

John Garrett’s youngest child, Mary, age 11 at the end of the war, stayed closer to home than her brothers. She had healed since a childhood fall had injured her leg, and she was developing into a strong but shy adolescent, not unlike her father at the same age. After the family moved to Mount Vernon Place, Mary attended the elite Miss Kummer’s School for Girls, a few doors away from home, as her sisters-in-law had. “Mademoiselle Kummer” taught her young charges the expected subjects for upper-class girls: deportment, music, classical literature, and hygiene. Mademoiselle instructed in French, a must for proper young ladies. But the teachers walked a fine line between providing too little academic instruction for the young ladies and requiring too much mental and physical exertion from them. Such activities, as one of the nation’s most prominent physicians, Edward H. Clarke, wrote in his 1873 *Sex in Education*, would cause young ladies to develop “monstrous brains and puny bodies, abnormally active cerebration and abnormally weak digestion, flowing thought and constipated bowels.”⁸⁹ Despite the possibility of developing a monstrous brain and weak digestion, Mary loved the school and developed friendships that would last for many years.

Mary adored both her parents, but it appears from her letters that she formed a unique relationship with her beloved father. With Harry and Robert II away at college for several years, Mary’s rapport with her father intensified, and it became obvious that he reciprocated in his admiration for his young daughter. She sat at his knee, listening to him talk of railroads, politics, and business, an education few women at the time experienced. She learned about the masculine side of life, one far

removed from the feminine expectations of marriage and motherhood. “He talked as free to me as to anyone else, even my mother,” Mary later wrote of the bond she shared with her father. To her he expressed “all his hopes and dreams for the future.”⁹⁰ As she matured, Mary displayed great intellectual curiosity. She loved to peruse the great philosophers and soon taught herself to read and write Greek. She also developed astute common sense and solid judgment, traits that John Garrett might have thought were missing in his sons. “I wish Mary had been born a boy,” he often said. In the next decade, he would come to increasingly rely on his daughter’s no-nonsense abilities and assistance.

By 1873, Garrett had been in office for fifteen years, a span already impressive by railroad standards. His tenacious battle to keep the B&O in business during the Civil War and to be at the Union’s beck and call, immediately followed by intensified rate wars, fast-freight competition, and the scramble to get to Pittsburgh and the South and Chicago left him spent and sick. He now battled against huge railroad conglomerates, particularly the Pennsylvania Railroad, now the largest corporation in the world.⁹¹ It had all come at a tremendous price, for the B&O and for Garrett. His mental and physical health began to decline. To make matters worse, the Panic of 1873 came crashing down with full force on the B&O. John W. Garrett, at age 53, had reached a breaking point. And so, perhaps, had Garrett’s Road.

The Storm Is upon You

1873–1877

BY THE FALL of 1873, the United States and much of Europe had spiraled into a catastrophic economic meltdown. Originally triggered by financial failures in Europe—specifically in Vienna and peripherally in the Ottoman Empire—the depression struck the United States hard, due to postwar inflation and a large trade deficit. But the finger of popular blame pointed directly at the railroads, with their overzealous expansion and the nation's unbridled postwar investment in the industry. The 1872 *Crédit Mobilier of America* scandal, in which major stockholders in the Union Pacific Railroad collaborated with a handful of on-the-take politicians—including Schuyler Colfax, who was President Ulysses S. Grant's vice president, and several US senators and representatives—to profit from exorbitant federal contracts in the construction of the eastern half of that railroad, resulting in massive overpayments. In September and October 1873, bank reserves in New York plunged from \$50 million to \$17 million, causing a run on the banks.

The economic fallout spread throughout the economy, where overspeculation in and overcapitalization by the railroads drained individual coffers as well as state and federal financial reserves. Railroads had offered a promising return on investment, and no one wanted to miss out. States and the federal government doled out lucrative land grants and subsidies to the rail companies, resulting in a whole generation—and many of its legislators—mortgaging themselves to the railroads.¹ Railroad tycoons had garnered much respect and power for their prewar role in stimulating the economy, and they were not about to relinquish that supremacy. They wanted their way—and usually got it. Almost every banking, tariff, and land bill passed by Congress after the war favored the railroads.²

Flush with capital and public confidence, railroads had overbuilt not only in track mileage, but also in ancillary facilities, such as warehouses, docks, and some allied industries—coal mining, in particular, among the Eastern railroads. They overplayed their hand. The overcommitted Jay Cooke and Company, one of the largest

banks in the country, failed in its \$300 million financing of the Northern Pacific Railroad and was the first to fall, declaring bankruptcy in 1873. It was the canary in the mine that foretold the coming catastrophe. Through the 1870s, of the nation's 364 railroads, ninety-one—that is, one in four—declared bankruptcy.³ As the nation's second-largest employer (after agriculture), the railroads' financial troubles tore through the economy. In the fall of 1873, President Grant, elected to his second term the previous year, ordered the stock market to close for ten days, "a week of Sundays," he said, to stem the losses. It did not help. Bankruptcies soared. Within months, the nation reeled under more than 5,000 commercial failures—a figure that, within two years, topped 18,000.⁴ The "Great Depression"—as it was called until the 1930s economic failure eclipsed it—lasted until 1878, when the country finally started to dig itself out.

If Garrett saw the disaster roaring down the road, he seemed untroubled. He was so unconcerned that in early 1873, he raised the B&O dividend to 10 percent; he had increased it to 9 percent only the year before. It was a hefty and precarious payout for a company built in its first decades on investment but increasingly, after the Civil War, on a tremendous debt load now nearing \$8 million.⁵ Garrett wrote to Junius Morgan in London, possibly the most powerful and influential financier in America and Europe, who kept a close watch over the B&O. Although Garrett might have routinely disregarded the advice of his board with the wave his hand, he did at least listen to a much higher authority—Junius S. Morgan. In his letter, Garrett rationalized his decision to increase dividends, assuring Morgan of what he called his "great principle—to earn more and to spend less, to fix a system under which reasonable and equitable rates between all points can be established and maintained."⁶ Morgan, unimpressed with Garrett's "great principle" and knowing it would fail in the current economic environment, predicted international fallout from the depression and calamity for the B&O. He continually urged Garrett to decrease the dividend, advice the stockholder-favoring president ignored. "It is either that or something more disastrous," Morgan warned of the consequences. "The storm is upon you."⁷

In his postwar rush to catch up, Garrett not only raised dividends and extended rail lines to key markets, but he also took on more debt to increase the B&O's equipment roster. From 1866 to 1873, the railroad's rolling stock nearly doubled, increasing to 473 locomotives, 261 passenger cars, and 10,292 freight cars, mostly for coal.⁸ As the economic depression cast its pall over the nation through the 1870s, freight and passenger revenues on all rail lines decreased, including the B&O. As the B&O's debt mounted, Garrett again tried to reassure Morgan about the soundness of his financial strategy, which included creating a sinking fund—putting funds aside to retire a portion of a debt, doing so either at a fixed rate, set when a loan was made or a bond issued, or at the current market value of the entity securing the loan

or bond, rather than repaying the debt in full at maturity (i.e., drawing the bonds)—and again Morgan disagreed with such a risky move. “The general view here [in England] regarding a Sinking Fund is that a loan should be extinguished either by purchase or by drawing of the bonds of the loan,” Morgan chastised, adding that “the B&O is at variance with what is here considered to be the true purpose of a Sinking Fund.”⁹

During this precarious financial time, Egisto Fabbri, a partner in Drexel Morgan & Company (and later a founder of the New York Metropolitan Opera), warned Garrett about an escalation of dangerous rumors circulating on both sides of the Atlantic regarding Garrett’s confidence in his own company: “Knowing as we both do that there are enemies on all sides spreading rumors injurious to your Co. and to you personally . . . that you had individually either sold or hypothecated a large part if not all of your B&O holdings.” Fabbri urged Garrett to immediately cable agents on the East Coast and in London to quash the damaging rumors.¹⁰

As the 1873 economic depression dragged on into its fourth year, railroad presidents stepped up their efforts “to adopt a cooperative spirit,” Garrett reported to Morgan. In March 1877, Garrett and other top railroad men met in New York City for “the most important conferences ever held between Trunk Lines for free conversation upon all subjects that pertain to demoralization which has so long existed in rates of transportation,” Garrett assured Morgan.¹¹ Even Commodore Vanderbilt, a seasoned veteran of railroading and numerous economic fallouts, appeared anxious. “Mr. Vanderbilt for the first time in my knowledge of such a meeting—fully representing his lines—showed an appreciation of the dangers to which railroad interests here have been exposed,” Garrett remarked.

Railroad presidents might have been anxious, but wage earners directly felt the brutal sting of the deepening depression. Robert II, vacationing at their Newport estate with his wife, wrote to his father in 1873, “In Rhode Island alone it is estimated that 100,000 operators have been thrown out of employment.”¹² In early 1873, B&O workers petitioned management for wage increases. Four engineers made the audacious move to meet directly with B&O vice president John King Jr. about increasing their wages by 15 percent.¹³ King chastised them for not going through the proper chain of command by meeting first with their supervisor. But he was not completely unsympathetic—or oblivious—to the volatile situation brewing from the combination of low wages, long hours, and dangerous work conditions.

After meeting with the engineers, King wrote to Garrett on April 12, 1873, alerting him to the simmering labor unrest and warning of dire circumstances if workers’ issues were not addressed. King suggested a \$75 annual bonus for workers who contributed to an accident-free year.¹⁴ That idea was preposterous, as no one worker could claim credit for avoiding accidents in the sprawling B&O system. King also

consulted with the B&O's master of machinery, who endorsed an annual bonus of \$40 or \$50. Although he suggested extra pay, King worried that the idea might backfire, causing a ripple effect through the company and the industry should the B&O make such concessions. "The most difficult part of it is that any advance to them will lead to advances for others," King advised Garrett. As the depression deepened, the wage issue came before the B&O's board, but the directors took no action and adjourned for their two-month holiday. The B&O workers' rage simmered, unchecked by management, and their perilous work conditions continued.

All nineteenth-century industrial workplaces were treacherous, with few or no laws overseeing the safety of workers. Working for the railroad proved to be especially perilous. As railroad accidents increasingly dominated the headlines, in 1846, Congress began requiring states to submit annual reports on the risk per mile for passengers and workers. With the railroads' rapid national expansion came an acceleration of accidents, for both passengers and workers; 1853 marked the deadliest year to date in fatalities, with eleven major collisions and 121 deaths.¹⁵ Two years later, when John Garrett became a B&O director, the *American Railroad Journal* reported 142 major railroad accidents, causing serious injury or death to more than 650 passengers and workers nationwide. Thirty-five of those accidents occurred on the B&O, involving thirty-five victims: two passengers and thirty-three crewmen.¹⁶

In the 1840s, B&O management wrote labor contracts that gave the company the power to fire or to withhold the wages of any employee who caused an accident.¹⁷ But beyond apparent drunkenness on the job or obvious negligence, assigning blame to an individual proved to be difficult. Many factors contributed to the high accident and fatality rates. Unlike double-tracked English railroads, most American trains used one line for travel in both directions, increasing the chance of head-on collisions. And there were always obstacles on the tracks. English visitors, accustomed to seeing fences lining the rails in their own country, commented on the number of animals that roamed freely on the tracks, causing countless derailments. Newspapers headlined the "awful human carnage" of the latest wreck.¹⁸ By the 1840s, the use of signals and the telegraph somewhat increased safety and productivity. But safety standards on American railroads remained inferior to those in Europe.

Frequent turnovers of unskilled labor also accounted for the high incidence of accidents. The B&O employed more workers than most railroads, an average of eight employees per mile—nearly 4,500 in all—compared with 927 workers on the 257-mile Central of Georgia Railway, or 3,581 workers on the 705-mile Illinois Central Railroad. The average annual pay of a B&O fireman was \$421, and the wages of a brakeman, \$493.¹⁹ In many cases, the B&O paid its workers \$200 less than other major railroads.²⁰

Railroad jobs were dirty, dangerous, and often fatal. Railroad workers suffered the highest death and casualty rates of any industrial laborers.²¹ They worked an average of fifteen hours daily on equipment that often was aging, unreliable, and unsafe. Insurance companies routinely denied coverage for railroad workers. Engineers sat atop volcanic steam engines that, despite pressure gauges, could explode at any minute. The *Railroad Gazette* called for safety inspections of engines. In 1870, the *Gazette* reported that “16 workers were killed and 27 injured in 37 [engine] explosions on American railroads, 13 due to culpable negligence, while others are due to faults of construction and working.”²² The *Gazette* recommended that “all boilers should be registered and receive a certificate that they are in working order.”

Brakemen suffered the most casualties, often getting crushed or run over by the gigantic cars and losing fingers and sometime limbs while trying to couple cars with the primitive and dangerous link-and-pin couplers. Before George Westinghouse’s invention of the lifesaving air brake in 1872, brakemen had to hop from car to car, setting the brakes on each car of the moving train in all kinds of hostile weather, usually while the cars beneath their feet were rocking and lurching.

One commentator described B&O workers on a typical, harrowing wintertime run through the Allegheny Mountains. When trying to control the train as it made its hazardous trip down the seventeen-mile grade at Piedmont, the “half-frozen brakemen and conductors [were] riding out on their trains where they had been setting and releasing hand brakes as they descended the Great Backbone Mountain in stormy weather.” They “were obliged to ride out the train from Piedmont to Grafton over several mountain ranges, clinging to the rear bumper of the rear car.”²³ Workers and their families suffered the abysmal effects of poverty. Suicide and depression were common. “In two instances, it is said, brakemen after the loss of rest and under the pressure of the depression of lost wages, etc., have purposely thrown themselves under the wheels,” the *Baltimore American* reported. “Nearly all the men said at one time or another when melancholy, they meditated about stepping over the bumpers and meeting instant death.”²⁴

Always worried about safety—and with Congress keeping a close watch on the railroads—Garrett reviewed the details of accidents daily. He derided Keyser about an unflattering article that had appeared in the *Baltimore American* about a recent accident on the Connellsville rail line. “Your superintendent is showing daily, through these dreadful accidents, an utter incompetency to govern men,” Garrett complained, adding that the train was going too fast and was “run with absolute recklessness. The train was going 30 mph and should have been going 10 mph.” Garrett did not mince words, accusing the conductor and the engineer of intoxication. Referring back to the B&O’s early policy prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on the job, Garrett wrote: “Beyond doubt, intemperance has been a leading curse upon the

Connellsville route. Direct that every man who drinks on or off duty shall be dismissed in every department of the service.”²⁵ In another case, Garrett worried about an accident at the Mount Clare Shops, caused by a defective flange in the engine. “Did this accident arise from any defect in this new switch?” Garrett asked William Prescott Smith. “Investigate the subject thoroughly and act as the interests of the Company require.”²⁶ Theorizing that too few B&O workers employed in Parkersburg and Bellaire might contribute to hazardous conditions there, Garrett ordered Thomas Sharp to increase their numbers.²⁷

Fixing flanges and removing obstacles from the tracks did little to mitigate the sheer terror and danger of working on a fast-moving train in all weather conditions. A regular contributor to the *Railroad Gazette*, warned of violent actions by workers if dangerous conditions and low pay continued: “The history of the strike on the Erie should be a sufficient reminder and serve as a warning to managers that there is a limit to the endurance of operatives, bounded by justice and reason and it is dangerous to exceed those limits.” He cited an example of a railroad (unnamed) that, oblivious to the needs of its employees, “hired saloon keepers, carpenters, and men of all trades to act as engineers and the press agreed that it did not require a great deal of skill to run a locomotive.” This continued until “not one locomotive on the line was in running condition.”²⁸

Delightful and Salubrious

Undeterred by the gathering storm over the nation and in his own company, Garrett took on yet another formidable B&O project. He fulfilled his promise, made before the Civil War, to develop the magnificent, mountainous Glades region of the Western Maryland by promoting tourism and building upscale hotels near B&O rail lines. He had long talked about the project, knowing firsthand, from many family vacations there, how enticing—and potentially profitable—the untrammelled region could be. After the war, Garrett sent out letters advertising his projected plans: “The Glades lands of the Allegheny Mountains furnish fine pastures, remarkably fine milk and butter, superior cold water, deer, and pheasants. It is delightful and salubrious.”²⁹ Tourism had picked up after the war, and wealthy Americans eagerly hopped on trains to escape to their favorite gathering spots, particularly Saratoga Springs and Niagara in New York, White Sulphur Springs in West Virginia, and Newport, Rhode Island. Garrett planned to draw the rich and famous to *his* state.

On July 4, 1872, the B&O broke ground for the Deer Park Hotel, east of Oakland, Maryland. Perhaps not coincidentally, within months the region would be named Garrett County. “The [Deer Park] hotel has proved to be attractive to tourists and others, and it is believed will add materially to the passenger traffic,” Garrett

wrote in the 1874 *Annual Report*. “It is anticipated that the advantages of ‘The Glades’ will become better known.”³⁰ A year to the day after the groundbreaking, the hotel, billed as being “swept by mountain breezes,” opened to much fanfare. The B&O’s premier architect, E. Francis Baldwin, designed a three-story, 104-room, wooden, Swiss Alpine style building, complete with a ballroom, sitting and dining rooms, and every modern convenience available to pamper its elite guests: electric lights, elevators, swimming pools, Turkish baths, bowling alleys, golf courses, and the perennial Victorian favorites, tennis and croquet. In the early stages of Garrett’s thoughts about the hotel, he expressed concern about recruiting staff in the sparsely populated region. Henry Garrett suggested hiring help from Europe. “It is possible,” Henry had written to John in 1866, “by making it known at Belfast, Londonderry, or Lisbon or some other respectable town in the north of Ireland that we would advance passage money.”³¹

Garrett stocked the hotel’s library shelves with classic works by Charles Dickens, Charles Darwin, Mark Twain, and Edward Gibbon, much as he had with the new library in Oakland. The Naval Academy Band frequently made the trip from Annapolis to the mountains to provide entertainment. Best of all, for tourists hoping to escape the annoyances of summer urban living, the hotel boasted of being “free from malaria, hay fever, and mosquitos.” Its menu featured Victorian-era favorites such as “deep sea food au gratin,” macaroni Milanese, mashed potatoes, French pancakes, chocolate éclairs, and cherry ice cream.³² The Deer Park Hotel soon gained fame as the “hotel of the presidents” from the frequent visits by national and international dignitaries. General Lew Wallace, who, in the 1864 Battle of Monocacy, had delayed the Confederate assault on Washington, DC, spent much time at the hotel, writing a soon-to-be-famous novel, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*. The resort catered to both East Coast and Midwestern guests, who traveled by train to the B&O station at Oakland, Maryland, from Cincinnati and St. Louis on the western side of the mountains and from Baltimore and points east on the other side. The hotel, which would be expanded and updated several times in the coming years, initially cost \$106,139.³³

From the minute its doors opened, the Deer Park Hotel was so successful that Garrett approved the construction of another hotel nearby, and the B&O opened the Oakland Hotel four years later. No matter how elegant his grand hotels, Garrett’s family and friends stayed in far more exclusive accommodations. Three-quarters of a mile west of the hotel, the B&O built five “cottages,” a modest description that belied the expansiveness of the nineteen-room private summer homes; Garrett and his son Harry claimed two of them. Architect Josias Pennington designed the Garretts’ cottages.³⁴ On her first visit to their cottage, Mary excitedly wrote to her mother, “The rooms are much larger than I supposed from your description.”³⁵

Rachel and Mary quickly set about decorating the family's newest getaway. Thankfully, the Decorative Arts movement—then enthralling a whole generation of well-to-do Americans, with its emphasis on handcrafted, beautiful objets d'art—arrived at just the right moment to guide Mary and Rachel as they began embellishing the family's mountain retreat. It helped that Mary's closest friends included some of the movers and shakers of the movement. In 1886, one friend, Louise Wake-man Knox (whose father, the Reverend James Hall Mason Knox, served as president of John Garrett's alma mater, Lafayette College), married famed New York designer Louis Comfort Tiffany, the aesthetic force behind the decor in many of the Garrett mansions. Another friend, Julia de Forest, was the sister of Lockwood de Forest, who had designed the magnificent "Indian Room" at the Garretts' Mount Vernon Place mansion. As they did in their other residences, the Garretts entertained their usual cadre of VIPs.

The Garrett family's estates, including those that were home to Robert II, Harry, and their wives, now totaled eight: three houses on Mount Vernon Place—number 11, where Robert and Mary Frick spent the winter season, and number 16, where Garrett's sister Elizabeth Barbara lived after John Garrett and his family moved to the third Mount Vernon Place mansion, Henry's former home at Monument and Cathedral; two nineteen-room cottages in Deer Park; Mary Frick's ancestral home, Uplands, outside of Baltimore; Robert and Mary Frick's cottage in Newport, where they spent the summers; and, not least, the massive Montebello estate, with its two historic manses. Many commentators theorize that nineteenth-century economist and social critic Thorstein Veblen, a doctoral student in sociology at Johns Hopkins University in the 1880s, had the Garretts in mind when he wrote of the excesses of the Gilded Age and coined the term "conspicuous consumption" in his 1889 *Theory of the Leisure Class*, "a mordant critique of the Garretts' world," according to a later critic.³⁶

Garrett quickly recognized another source of profitable tourism in the mountains. A much more egalitarian resort, Mountain Lake Park, located midway between the opulent Deer Park and Oakland Hotels that attracted well-to-do tourists from the East Coast and the Midwest, took root in 1881. Modeled on the popular Methodist-inspired Chautauqua Institution, started in western New York in 1874, Maryland's "Park," as it came to be called, was begun by four Methodist ministers and a group of businessmen from nearby Wheeling, West Virginia. It soon attracted residents—and curious onlookers.

New York's Chautauqua had gained popularity as a hybrid—adult self-help education infused with a dash of old-time religion—as secular public education began spreading throughout the United States and distancing itself from formal religious schooling.³⁷ Chautauqua combined bona fide educational programs, even offering

certificates to those who completed the Chautauqua Literacy and Scientific Circle, with the emotional excitement of traditional camp meetings, long the mainstay of religious activity in rural America. The movement spread rapidly, soon planting itself in the fertile ground of Garrett County. The Park, located on 800 acres near the road that connected Deer Park and Oakland, soon drew a middle-class crowd interested in hearing its Christian-inspired temperance lecturers and well-known educational leaders, watching theater and musical productions, and participating in “a day honoring veterans of the Civil War.”³⁸ The Park’s “high moral tone” provided a direct counterpoint to the lighthearted pastimes of bowling and billiards at the more expensive Deer Park and Oakland resorts.³⁹ Chautauquans could build a house in the Park, and guests could stay at one of the many then-fashionable gingerbread houses that dotted the area.

While not a Methodist and not expressing any particular interest in Chautauqua, Garrett easily could see an opportunity to profit from a lakeside resort for less-affluent tourists. The B&O did not own the Park, but the company capitalized on its proximity to the B&O station in Oakland by offering tourist excursions from the East Coast and the Midwest. For many years, the B&O donated 10 percent of all train tickets sold to that destination to the Park itself, to encourage business there.⁴⁰ No matter that Mountain Lake Park had no lake. Garrett simply created one, hiring engineers to dam nearby streams. The lake provided amusements for vacationers and proved to be useful in winter as a source of much-needed ice water for the B&O’s hotels and dining cars. Writing to John Wilson, master of the road, about complaints from passengers regarding the lack of ice water, Garrett emphasized that “it is useless to expend large sums to secure passengers for our lines if they are driven to other lines by such neglect.”⁴¹ By the 1880s, ice harvesting became a major source of revenue for Park residents.

Mountain Lake Park also became a popular venue for speakers affiliated with the growing women’s suffrage movement, in which Garrett’s daughter would one day become deeply involved. For the time being, though, the “camp meetings” at the Park did not impress her. “I’m afraid it will not add much to the attractiveness to either [the Deer Park or Oakland Hotels],” Mary wrote in 1882.⁴² These two more-luxurious hotels became so popular that by the early 1880s, both had doubled in size. Garrett’s investments paid off, as the B&O’s tourism ventures helped the company ride out national financial reversals, with both hotels earning modest profits.⁴³

The B&O filled nearly every minute of Garrett’s life. Despite having two vice presidents, he continued to peruse as many letters and cables as possible, often personally responding to them. He answered a letter from Hugh Rice, a noted civil engineer who first demonstrated the feasibility of building a ship channel for Houston, Texas. Rice expressed interest in railroads, and Garrett did not miss the opportunity to

extol the benefits the B&O had brought to Maryland: “At the time of the commencement of the B&O in 1827 the taxable basis embracing the entire real and personal wealth of Baltimore was but \$25,000,000. That basis now exceeds \$150,000,000!” In another case, Garrett was “greatly grieved at the result of the villainous outrage which was perpetrated last Wednesday evening when someone threw a stone at an amiable, excellent woman” on the street near a B&O station. “The company offers a reward for his arrest and conviction,” Garrett stated, and promised to hire a detective to seek out the miscreant. He responded to complaints from the guests at a Martinsburg hotel that the “rail whistling” of nearby B&O trains kept them awake. He politely turned down a request by a resident in Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania, to run a line through the town, which was thirty-five miles south of Pittsburgh: “The B&O at present is involved in so many enterprises involving such large costs that I regret to advise you it will not work out at this time.”⁴⁴ Since he attended to every detail of his domain, those “many enterprises” began to take a toll on Garrett’s health.

Mental Rest Is Essential

In early 1873, Garrett started complaining of dizziness, anxiety, and headaches. He became disoriented and fatigued. The depression that had affected him in adolescence at the Lafayette Preparatory School seemed to be returning. Garrett’s symptoms resembled an illness that was diagnosed in 1869 and labeled “neurasthenia” by American physician George M. Beard. The famed neurologist attributed the malady to the pressures of modern urban life, particularly for highly competitive upper-class men, as well as for women whose lives had been thwarted by societal restrictions.⁴⁵ It is unknown if doctors ever clinically diagnosed Garrett with neurasthenia or depression, but, as his symptoms grew increasingly worrisome, his doctor ordered complete rest. “Whilst [the physician] said I might get entirely well,” Garrett informed his family, “he said this could only result by taking at least a year of entire relaxation with the cessation of thought upon subjects that have so long occupied me.”⁴⁶

B&O vice president William Keyser attributed Garrett’s illness to “the constant strain to which he was subjected,” remarking that he had watched as Garrett worked long hours during the war and got no relief—only increased pressures—thereafter.⁴⁷ In the eight years since the end of the Civil War, Garrett had taken on formidable and enormously costly projects—repairing war-damaged tracks and equipment; expanding Locust Point; building two massive bridges over the Ohio River; completing the line to Pittsburgh; forging B&O tracks through the South; initiating construction on the route to Chicago; planning a possible New York line; erecting

costly hotels and stations along existing B&O lines; and, most recently, breaking ground for a sizable new tourism enterprise in Western Maryland—all the while taking on more debt. He also faced the business-as-usual problems of rate wars and incursions by competitors, particularly the Pennsylvania Railroad, and, as the economic depression worsened, increasing rumblings of labor unrest among his workers. Keyser fully understood Garrett's mental frailties; he, too, would suffer a complete breakdown a few years later, apparently from the pressures of the B&O. Garrett offered to resign in 1873, but the board declined and instead appointed vice president John King Jr. as president pro tem.

With his health declining, Garrett missed the grand inauguration of the Deer Park Hotel on July 4, 1873, attended by 400 dignitaries. A few days later, Garrett, Rachel, and 19-year-old Mary left for what would become a fifteen-month curative trip to Europe. They sailed on the *Berliner*, one of the steamships in the B&O–North German Lloyd partnership. The farther away from the B&O Garrett traveled, the better he felt. Within two months of leaving Baltimore, he wrote to his sister that “I am improving slowly, but I find that almost absolute mental rest is essential.” Recognizing the stresses he had lived through in the past fifteen years, he added, “I suppose my brain has been so hard worked for so long a period that its disturbance can only be remedied by much repose.”⁴⁸

Although separated by an ocean from the B&O, Garrett did not follow his doctor's orders for a complete respite. “Papa is not getting much rest,” Mary reported back to the family.⁴⁹ As he traveled, he continued to tend to B&O business, visiting Junius Morgan in London and carrying out obligatory social commitments. Within days of arriving in London, he met with steamship owners and financiers to secure a profitable interest rate on a large block of B&O bonds—just weeks before the 1873 economic catastrophe struck. He assumed a self-appointed role as Baltimore's ambassador, “presenting the great advantages of Baltimore as a commercial center.”⁵⁰ King and Keyser worked in the shadows of Garrett's long-distance public pronouncements, but they made major decisions and kept the company going during his absence. Robert II kept his father apprised of the Valley Railroad; Harry, too, updated his father with regular correspondence from RG&S, while Harry's young sons sent endearing messages to Rachel.⁵¹

Mary, intrigued by her father's world of railroads since the Civil War days, stayed close to his side and took a keen interest in his business affairs, collecting and archiving documents and newspaper clippings about railroads, the B&O in particular.⁵² She began to assume a role that would become increasingly important to her father—and to her. “Acting as Papa's secretary leaves me very little time for my own letters,” Mary wrote soon after the start of their trip.⁵³ She opened the “heavy correspondence” he received daily, answered cables, and sat in on business meetings.

She became “his private secretary, his best adviser, and his most trusted friend, even above his sons,” the *New York Times* observed.⁵⁴ When her father felt too ill to write, she did the job for him.⁵⁵ With every telegram, contract, and piece of correspondence, Mary was learning the details of railroading and the inner workings of the B&O. Probably more than any other young woman of that era, she was immersed in the masculine world of railroading, an apprenticeship she could not have gotten at Miss Kummer’s School for Girls or anywhere else in the country.

Mary tried, in vain, to protect her father from distressing news. In October 1873, she opened a cable from her brother Robert describing the worsening financial crisis back home: “All the railroads are discharging hands and manufacturers all over the country are either running on short time or have stopped altogether.”⁵⁶ The gloomy economic news did not impede the Garretts’ lavish journeys or spending, however. They traveled like royalty. A friend of Mary’s later recalled that when she joined the family’s European sojourn, they traveled “in an elegant carriage with coachman and a footman at their disposal and servants to do their every bidding.” Mary was accompanied by “a personal servant who brushed her clothing and dressed her.”⁵⁷ Always a great chronicler, Mary kept meticulous accounts of the family’s travels. In London, the Garretts stayed at one of the city’s grandest old establishments, the Buckingham Palace Hotel, across from Queen Victoria’s residence. The family received “special orders” to visit the queen’s private quarters at Windsor Castle. “It was magnificent,” Mary reported to her Aunt Lizzie.⁵⁸

They also visited the queen’s stables, but Garrett found that the monarch’s horses paled in comparison with his own at Montebello. “I have not yet seen any thoroughbreds equal to our own beauties, although I have seen the queen’s best at her celebrated farms and at Hampton Court,” Garrett wrote to his mother.⁵⁹ They were invited to see Prince Albert’s dairy farm at Windsor, famed as a workingman’s model of agricultural efficiency and egalitarianism. Mary was not quite as excited as her father about traipsing around the royal farm and abandoned the tour at “the pig sty.”⁶⁰ Again, Garrett found the livestock inferior to his own.

Mary kept a detailed journal of the trip, describing Zurich, Cologne, the curative spa at Baden-Baden, a hike to the top of Mt. Vesuvius, leisurely gondola rides on the Grand Canal in Venice, archeological treks to ancient sites, whale-watching boat rides off the coast of England, and visits to Martin Luther’s and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s houses in Frankfurt. They drove past George Peabody’s former home, near the “Old Lady of Threadneedle Street”—a term Londoners use to refer to the Bank of England.⁶¹ For several weeks the Garretts traveled with their friends, General George McClellan and his wife Mary Ellen.⁶² Junius Morgan also frequently caught up with them for short visits during their travels. While on a sumptuous, weeks-long stay in Paris, they met up with Robert II and Mary Frick. Robert wrote

home to his aunt: “There are quite a number of Baltimore people here. They all seem to like the place very much.”⁶³

But Garrett, homesick for his beloved Baltimore, did not like Paris—or any other locales that he visited. “All is very different in Europe, but nowhere do I find surroundings more delightful than those of home,” he pined in a letter to his sister Lizzie in the fall of 1873, adding that he especially missed Montebello: “the woods, the meadows, the horses, the sheep, and the garden and the flowers.”⁶⁴ Spending sprees did little to improve his spirits. He doted on his wife and daughter, buying them sapphire and diamond rings in Paris and gold earrings and filigree combs in Rome. Mary noticed that her father was “especially amused by the beautifully dressed and extremely stylish girls, who are the salesgirls.”⁶⁵ He indulged his love of classical art, buying statuary and paintings for his expanding art collection, displayed in his many homes and at the Peabody Institute. The family also tended to more serious matters: tracing Garrett’s maternal Stouffer family genealogy in Germany and visiting self-help charities, searching out ideas Garrett might apply to Baltimore’s philanthropic activities.

Despite his doctor’s orders to rest, Garrett continued overseeing major B&O projects, particularly the ongoing expansion to Chicago. During Garrett’s fifteen-month absence, Mary drafted endless telegrams and letters from her father to vice president John King Jr. and other officers, ordering new projects and inquiring about uncompleted ones.⁶⁶ In response, John L. Wilson, the master of the road, updated Garrett with “a short history of some of the work now in progress.” In July 1874, after Garrett had been away for a year, Wilson wrote that “the Main Line, Washington Branch, and Metropolitan and Parkersburg are all in first class condition,” and that the company continued widening tunnels, rebuilding “a large number of bridges,” straightening curves, installing fire pumps in the warehouses and elevators at Locust Point, and double tracking the rails. “The Valley Road is in good condition,” he added.⁶⁷

While in England, Garrett socialized with the prominent British philosopher Herbert Spencer, who was surprised to learn that Garrett, looking old beyond his years, was 53, the same age as he. “Mr. Garrett exhibited the results so common in America, of overwork,” Spencer observed. “I began to preach to him of the gospel of relaxation.”⁶⁸ Keyser, who accompanied Garrett on a visit to the Englishman, recalled that Spencer passed on advice his own physicians had given him earlier in his life: “My doctors ordered me to limit my work to six hours a day telling me to then ‘close down my desk.’”⁶⁹ Garrett was much taken with Spencer, later inviting him to Montebello and naming one of his thoroughbreds, “a rich mahogany Bay,” after the famed political theorist.⁷⁰ But it is doubtful that Garrett ever converted to Spencer’s “gospel of relaxation.” By the time the family arrived at their next stop—in

Nice, France, in February—Garrett became more disoriented, writing rambling, at times incoherent, letters to his mother and sister.

A Dangerous Mode of Financiering

One piece of correspondence from the B&O vice president was not so encouraging. On January 1, 1874, King wrote to Garrett about an engineer's strike in Pittsburgh.⁷¹ This troubling news did not help Garrett's recuperation. King continued to keep Garrett updated about labor unrest on the B&O railroad, and there was still more despairing news. Johns Hopkins died on Christmas Eve 1873, at the age of 79. A few days earlier, Keyser recalled, Hopkins had gone out in frigid, snowy weather "without an overcoat or boots" and caught a cold. He refused to call a doctor. "Since his former doctor had charged him so exorbitantly . . . he made up his mind to get along without one."⁷² "This is my last illness," Hopkins murmured, "and I am amazed to realize with what composure I face death."⁷³ He died within a few days, and his funeral was held at his longtime home on Saratoga Street, with burial in Green Mount Cemetery. "His judgments were so good and his interest so large as to make his voice all powerful," one obituary noted of the financier and philanthropist.⁷⁴

After years of friendship and a collegial working relationship, the once-strong bond between Hopkins and Garrett had recently shown signs of strain. Keyser stated that before Garrett sailed abroad, the two men had feuded over a \$1,400 debt Hopkins felt Garrett owed him after an investment in the Baltimore Copper Company failed years earlier. Garrett refused to pay and Hopkins threatened "to break all relations" between them. Considering that, at the time, both men were worth millions, the amount was trifling. The dispute, Keyser wrote, was "indicative of the characteristics of these two remarkable men, [who] permitted so paltry a sum to threaten serious rupture between them and break up relations existing for many years, from which both had derived great pecuniary advantage."⁷⁵

Far more serious, however, was that with Garrett abroad for a lengthy period, Hopkins came to understand what the 1888 *Annual Report* would later call Garrett's "tricks of bookkeeping."⁷⁶ Hopkins pulled back Garrett's veil of secrecy and was shocked by what he found. Garrett, the "Aladdin of railroad management," could no longer perform magic on the B&O account books. Over the years, Garrett had taken on more and more debt to underwrite costly B&O projects, which Keyser called "a dangerous mode of financiering."⁷⁷ Garrett had not followed his own advice, given years earlier, when RG&S prepared to weather the Panic of 1857 and Garrett assured George Peabody that the family firm was "restricting our transactions and managing our affairs as [to] be under no extended or anxious arrangements

either for ourselves or for our friends.”⁷⁸ Garrett’s fiscal stewardship of the B&O proved to be far different—and riskier.

Hopkins, who had chaired the company’s finance committee for thirty years, “had never been called upon for any actual service,” Keyser declared, particularly under Garrett’s presidency. “Mr. Garrett had pursued the policy of keeping such matters in his own hands.”⁷⁹ From his earliest days as a board director and then as president, Garrett insisted on seeing all accounts and transactions. He wrote his own president’s statements in the B&O’s *Annual Reports*, even while he was abroad for extended periods, and edited the *Annual Reports* with a heavy hand. He kept tight control on public records and accounting. Perhaps Garrett persuaded some of the board members to readily acquiesce to his schemes. There is no evidence, for example, that William Findley Burns, Garrett’s lifelong friend from their days together at Lafayette College who later served on the B&O board’s finance committee and as a director of the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad, seemed troubled by the B&O’s ledgers.

In Garrett’s extended absence, however, Hopkins demanded to see a full account of the railroad’s liabilities and assets. What followed, Keyser reported, was unpleasant. After reading the financial reports, Hopkins “flew into a violent rage, ending with his roundly abusing everybody connected with the concern.” In his account of the incident, Keyser then stated, “I must confess, the exhibit was not a very flattering one, as the indebtedness amounted to millions, falling due at short intervals, and the valuable assets were confined to the junior branch roads, which had at the moment little, if any market value.” Keyser, who claimed his responsibility was in road construction and maintenance, not finance, was unsympathetic to Hopkins’s purported sudden awareness of the company’s true financial condition, asserting that, “as chairman of the finance committee, he [Hopkins] was as much, if not more, responsible for the condition he complained of than anyone else.”⁸⁰ Hopkins continued his rampage for days. “In an interview with Mr. King, [Hopkins] lost control of his temper, and indulged in such uncomplimentary assertions [that] Mr. King declined to have any further intercourse with him,” Keyser recounted. Nonetheless, “after exhausting his expletives,” Hopkins calmed down and once again, as he had in similar situations, extended a generous bailout to the B&O to service the debts—this time nearly \$1 million.⁸¹

It is hard to imagine that Johns Hopkins, a brilliant financier who had amassed one of the great fortunes of the day, fell asleep at the wheel in his stewardship of the company in which he had been intimately involved almost since its founding, one that had provided most of his wealth. But it *is* possible that either he was complicit with Garrett’s creative accounting or not fully aware of the extent of the deceptions. Garrett held the advantage, always keeping the company’s monetary matters close to the vest, funneling all accounting documents to his desk, revealing little about any

fiscal difficulties in the *Annual Reports*, and carefully obfuscating negative finances in the accounts. Garrett often rationalized his expensive projects by citing the benefits of commercial growth to regions along B&O tracks and to Baltimore, as well as the future financial rewards that would arise from such economic development.

If Keyser's story is to be believed—and later official reports support it—for years Garrett had managed to deceive everyone about the company's true financial health: his vice presidents—particularly John King Jr., who, beginning in 1873, for all intents and purposes had run the company, due to Garrett's absences and health problems—his accountants; his board; possibly even Hopkins, his closest ally. Garrett's statements in the *Annual Reports* brimmed with good news about his initiatives, showing little concern for or references to the company's financial difficulties or mounting liabilities, and glibly discounting the enormity of the situation. In the postwar years, the B&O's debt more than tripled.⁸² In the 1874 report, Garrett assured stockholders that all payments on the company's obligations "will be paid on time with appropriations made for the funds."⁸³ Garrett felt that a continued increase in traffic would offset any losses—his "great principle," he had explained to Junius Morgan—a plan that the ongoing effects of the 1873 depression continued to obliterate.

"The theory upon which this company was financed," Keyser wrote, "and which ultimately would prove its ruin, placed it in a false position, compelling its managers to maintain the appearance of prosperity long after the substance had departed. This theory, adopted by the President and never openly questioned by the Board of Directors, was a novel as well as a radical one."⁸⁴ In the 1874 *Annual Report*, as the 1873 depression forced businesses into bankruptcy and individuals could not pay for coal—the B&O's bread-and-butter commodity—Garrett glossed over the problem of declining profits from this source. He reverted to a tactic used from his earliest years as president: diminishing the effects of falling revenues and emphasizing successful cost-cutting measures—an important public strategy for a profit-making company. Although income had decreased, Garrett wrote, expenses had been slashed enough to result in a net profit of \$485,988.60, an increase over profits from 1872. "In the midst of the general depression," he added, "it will be satisfactory to the shareholders of the B&O Company to see the bonds on their lines so appreciated that they rank at the highest grade of American securities."⁸⁵ In the 1875 *Annual Report*, he again wrote of the decreased demand for coal. The B&O had dropped its tariff to twenty-five cents per ton, but "decreased consumption prevented satisfactory development of this plan." Garrett noted that while freight traffic had declined, passenger revenues had offset the loss.⁸⁶

But suspicions continued to swirl about the company's finances. Not everything Garrett said added up. "Unfortunately, Mr. Garrett's optimism was not entirely shared by all who digested his glowing reports," Keyser noted. "The small amount

of capital stock, in comparison with its rival trunk lines [was] a very bad thing. The Pennsylvania and the New York Central might have high stock capitalization, but at least they could—if necessity arose—suspend their dividends for a time,” a course of action Garrett would never take.⁸⁷ Added to this was widespread criticism of the extended Garrett family’s near-monopoly on B&O stocks: their own shares and, after Hopkins’s death, his nearly \$7 million in shares that endowed the university and hospital named after him, shares over which Garrett, as a university trustee, had great influence.

While there might have been questions about the B&O’s finances, other railroads faced the same scrutiny. Garrett could find some cheer in the similar corporate convulsions the Pennsylvania Railroad experienced during the Panic of 1873. That railroad had overextended and fell into worrisome financial shape. At its annual meeting in March 1874, a group of nervous stockholders staged a revolt against the Board of Directors and formed a committee to investigate J. Edgar Thomson’s stewardship and the company’s general condition. The committee suspended all expansion projects until completing its report. In the midst of the financial inquiry, Thomson died on May 27, 1874, at the age of 66. He had experienced two heart attacks, and his wife reported that he had been “suffering for months before his death.”⁸⁸ A recent break with his longtime trusted colleague, Tom Scott, also might have exacerbated Thomson’s ill health. Scott, similarly under a cloud of suspicion from the stockholders, took Thomson’s place. John King Jr. wrote to Garrett about this development: “I learned from the most reliable sources that if the question of a successor to Mr. Thomson had been left alone to the stockholders, Mr. Scott probably would not have been selected; but the Board saw fit to elect him.”⁸⁹ What little fortune Thomson accumulated had dwindled to a mere \$1.3 million—a pittance compared with his railroad peers. In his last days, the childless Thomson wrestled with the best way to bequeath his estate, finally deciding to leave the bulk of it to an orphanage for children whose fathers had been killed working for the Pennsylvania Railroad.

The stockholders’ investigating committee submitted its report in September. While that document generally vindicated Thomson and found the company sufficiently healthy financially, the committee set stringent conditions. They essentially halted the Pennsylvania Railroad’s era of expansion, particularly the company’s various Scott-inspired adventures in the South and Southwest. In the future, the committee insisted, the company must confine itself to its traditional Eastern territory, bounded by such gateways as Chicago and St. Louis on its western end, and Cincinnati and Washington, DC, on its southern part. So it was. With only a few later additions, the Pennsylvania Railroad system’s shape in 1873 remained in place for the rest of its corporate existence. But that was more than enough; Thomson and

Scott had created it exceptionally well.⁹⁰ The deaths of Johns Hopkins and J. Edgar Thomson marked the passing of two great railroad pioneers, one who had worked behind the scenes for half a century to make the B&O a viable competitor, and the other who had built the Pennsylvania to become the largest railroad in the world.

In October 1874, the Garretts returned home from Europe. The fifteen-month restorative trip did not provide the needed cure. Garrett's physical appearance and personality had changed dramatically, observers noted. He moved slowly, had gained weight, and seemed off kilter.⁹¹ One individual described Garrett as "a portly figure, with a bluish-grey eye and a solid and unanxious tread and pace. He had a hard, round head, a slow and gracious manner."⁹² Garrett's absence and illness had not slowed the B&O's progression westward. His ambitious goal of reaching Chicago, begun immediately after the Civil War, finally came to fruition after nearly a decade of patching together a circuitous route through Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana. B&O trains rolled into Chicago in November 1874, a month after Garrett had returned.⁹³ During Garrett's absence in 1873–1874, workers had finished laying the track on the new extension into Chicago. The iron and steel for the tracks came from the B&O's rolling mill in Cumberland, Maryland, and the cost of the project, known as the Chicago division, totaled \$7.8 million.⁹⁴

While abroad, Garrett had continued to rule the B&O, making critical decisions and imparting orders about pending projects. Many questioned his ability to make such arrangements during his debilitating illness. Fortunately, the lion's share of the final year's work to complete the Chicago line rested with vice presidents King and Keyser. With his prized Chicago connection finally on the B&O map, Garrett kept a close watch on it. He ordered Robert II to "look thoroughly to all economics out on Chicago and all trans-Ohio," reminding his son to pay attention to the smallest detail: "Give these important matters full time. We must accomplish results through the most resourceful and economic management at all points."⁹⁵

Proud of his victory in getting to Chicago and delighted at the possibility that it ruffled a few feathers among his competitors, Garrett boasted in the 1876 *Annual Report* that the "opening of this extension to Chicago excited much jealousy and antagonism on the part of a number of competing lines. It was alleged that the traffic relations of the previously existing railway system in the Northeast were seriously disturbed by this new element."⁹⁶ To ensure a profitable debut, Garrett cut rates on the Chicago line. Not unexpectedly, the Pennsylvania Railroad quickly retaliated by cutting off the B&O's Philadelphia–New York passenger service on its tracks.⁹⁷

The B&O's rate cut and the disturbance of "traffic relations in the Northeast" more than likely precipitated a hastily convened meeting with Garrett, Commodore Vanderbilt, Tom Scott, and Hugh Jewett, who was the president of the Erie Rail-

road, that took place after Garrett's return from Europe. They came for a "social visit," Keyser explained, to give Garrett "assurance of their friendly disposition."⁹⁸ More than likely, Keyser's "social visit" assessment was a bit sarcastic, considering that the Big Four trunk lines were once again fighting a vicious rate war. Garrett claimed his latest move to lower rates was a right the B&O had, because Baltimore lay that much closer to the interior.

Whatever their intentions, the meeting went badly. Garrett, still in a delicate mental state, flew off the handle, accusing his competitors of duplicity. Vanderbilt, who had always liked Garrett and enjoyed a cordial relationship with him, seemed unperturbed. The Commodore described the meeting as a "very pleasant interview . . . as pleasant a one as ever was held when so much capital was represented." Vanderbilt described Garrett as "a high-toned honorable man . . . willing to concede to any equitable arrangement between all the parties if the equities can be got at. As to the general principles of railroading, I find by conversation with him that President Garrett exactly agrees with me on all of them; or, in other words, I agree with him so far as he has expressed his views to me."⁹⁹ Despite Vanderbilt's glowing recollection of the meeting, Junius Morgan felt unsure of the outcome and of Garrett's ability to handle the volatile situation, given his mental confusion. Morgan rushed to Baltimore to sort out the escalating feud, but to little avail. It was soon back to business—bad business—as usual.

As with many of his expansion plans, Garrett had hoped that little towns would spring up along B&O tracks to develop commerce in the interior. In 1874, one such railroad workers' town, Garrett, arose in DeKalb County, in the northeastern part of Indiana. Keyser personally purchased 600 acres of land for the town, since "the charter of the [B&O] did not authorize it to embark in such enterprises."¹⁰⁰ The town of Garrett featured two hotels, shops, saloons, a newspaper, and a school—and plenty of jobs for B&O workers. By 1875, the growing settlement welcomed immigrants from Romania, Poland, Germany, and Hungary, all eager to work for the railroad. Workers crammed into the town's two boardinghouses and took turns sleeping in beds, on floors, and in hallways. Always ready to report for duty for the next trip to Chicago and back—175 miles one way—they were paid \$1.40 per round trip, which could last from twelve to fifty-five hours.¹⁰¹

The B&O's Chicago division did not see an immediate payback. Deficits cancelled out the first year's gains, but within two years, Garrett assured his stockholders that "the Chicago division has already demonstrated its power and usefulness."¹⁰² Garrett's victory in reaching Chicago proved to be bittersweet; he remained physically fragile and mentally unstable. In 1876, Garrett's physician noted that he still suffered from "brain fag"—a popular term at the time to describe mental exhaustion and depression.¹⁰³

Fire and Blood

Garrett soon faced what the *Baltimore American* described as “the gravest crisis of his life.”¹⁰⁴ Despite new lines and more-modern equipment, as the economic fallout from the Panic of 1873 continued into its fourth year, revenues from B&O freight and passenger traffic plummeted. Expenses-to-earnings figures on the entire B&O system dropped from 65 percent in 1873 to 62 percent in 1877, a nearly \$600,000 decrease in net revenues.¹⁰⁵ Garrett and the heads of the major railroads, who were facing similar problems, tried to cut redundancy by divvying up traffic, but the attempt at collegiality failed. As he had done in the first years of his B&O presidency, following the prolonged Panic of 1857, Garrett once more cut costs at every level—except dividends. He also asked Junius Morgan for another loan to cover debt payments, and again the London banker refused, urging Garrett instead to cut his latest dividend.

While stockholders welcomed their continued annual payouts, B&O wage earners slipped deeper into poverty. Garrett put many workers on “short time,” reducing their hours. In the fall of 1876, he imposed a 10 percent reduction in wages. This spelled doom for most laborers, especially those living in rural areas along the B&O lines, where there were few chances for other employment. Rising food prices and poor crop yields across the country exacerbated their plight. On his travels along the B&O, Keyser came face to face with the workers’ mounting despair. “I fully appreciated the hardships to which they were being subjected,” he observed in 1875, “and the general spirit of discontent which prevailed became more and more manifest in the ominous mutterings which from time to time reached my ears.” Keyser learned of many pockets of rebellion, where small groups of the railroad’s laborers were in “open revolt.”¹⁰⁶ Garrett got word that several B&O hotel and sleeping car employees were getting meals without paying for them, and he ordered the immediate dismissal of these workers.¹⁰⁷

Poverty and hopelessness pervaded every profession and industry. Unemployment reached 14 percent nationwide, and 25 percent in New York City.¹⁰⁸ “The whole country began to swarm with tramps,” Keyser wrote, “many of them able-bodied, skilled mechanics, [who] thus thrown out of employment became, temporarily, vagabonds, moving up and down the land, seeking food and shelter, living by charity, and, in many cases where that failed them, by theft.”¹⁰⁹ In the early summer of 1877, 150 box makers and 700 can makers in Baltimore went on strike, following a wage reduction due to increased mechanization in their industries and an unusually cold winter. City officials estimated that during the winter, hundreds of families had sought shelter in police stations, with many lacking the bare necessities of fuel or food.¹¹⁰

Regardless of whether the “ominous mutterings” and news of “open revolt” among B&O workers reached Garrett’s ears, he threw fuel on the fire. In early July, he started keeping lists of “men who cause trouble,” noting that he was following company policy.¹¹¹ Roughly a week later, at the July 11 board meeting, Garrett ignited a firestorm when he made a simple and direct statement to “officers and employees of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.” Citing “the depression affecting the usual earnings of railroad companies and rendering further reduction of expenses necessary; therefore, be it resolved [to enact] a reduction of ten percent compensation of all officers and employees at every level and grade, effective July 16.” “The Baltimore and Ohio postponed this action,” Garrett noted, “until its great competitors, the Pennsylvania, the New York Central and Hudson River, and the New York and Erie companies had made general and similar reductions in pay.”¹¹²

But Garrett chose to ignore the consequences that had occurred after other railroads made similar cuts. Earlier in the year, slashed pay had caused workers on the Boston and Maine Railroad to walk off the job. Tom Scott experienced similar trouble after his wage cuts on the Pennsylvania Railroad. Garrett probably remembered the B&O strike in May 1857, when, as a new director, he came down hard on the striking conductors; he had watched as that uprising quickly spread from Baltimore to Martinsburg, West Virginia. This time, although Garrett might have realized the additional hardship lowered pay would impose in the midst of the economic depression, he still expected his workers to remain fully compliant and loyal. Railroad presidents were powerful, and he knew he could use every bit of that authority, if needed. Board members approved Garrett’s plan to cut wages (the second such action in eight months), adjourned until the next meeting in September, and left for their two-month summer vacations. Not everyone was so sanguine. The *Wall Street Journal* predicted trouble, noting, “The only injustice a railroad can inflict upon its men is to neglect paying them.”¹¹³ The *Railroad Gazette* even called for a 10 percent increase in wages.¹¹⁴

Garrett did not agree with such thinking. While he probably did not feel the 10 percent reduction of his \$4,000 salary in the slightest, lowering their pay proved to be the final straw for B&O workers. They didn’t wait until the effective date of July 16. Three days after Garrett issued the mandate, the workers’ years of pent-up rage exploded into a massive labor uprising that soon spread as far west as Illinois and Missouri. The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 became the first major—and violent—nationwide labor strike in the United States. It lasted forty-five days, crippled train traffic on the East Coast, spread to fourteen states and to other industries beyond railroads, killed a hundred people and injured more than a thousand, and forever changed the history of labor/management relations in the United States. The insurgency struck terror in the hearts of American industrialists. They feared

that the escalating organized labor movement in Europe, which had gained popularity with the founding of the International Workingmen's Association in London in 1864 and had long been associated with communism, would take hold in the United States.

Although American wage earners did not yet have the strong labor unions or collective bargaining rights that would develop later—there were only nine unions at the time, with a total membership of about fifty thousand—they took bold action.¹¹⁵ On July 14, B&O freight firemen in Martinsburg, West Virginia, blocked B&O cars from passing along the tracks, threatening to logjam the road until the second wage reduction was revoked. The governor called in the local militia, but the sympathetic troops refused to act against these rebellious workmen. Garrett appealed to the governor to call in federal troops to quell what Secretary of War George W. McCrary already had labeled an “insurrection.”¹¹⁶ On July 17, Garrett urgently cabled President Rutherford B. Hayes: “It is impossible for the company to move any freight trains because of the open intimidation [in Martinsburg] of strikers and attacks that they have made upon men in the service of the company who are willing to work.”¹¹⁷ Garrett also alerted McCrary, fearing that “as soon as strikers are dispersed from Martinsburg they will adopt a ‘bush-whacking’ war along the line, both in Maryland and West Virginia. They are well armed and have threatened non-strikers that they ‘may look for bullets along the line.’”¹¹⁸ Within days, McCrary sent in the troops.

On July 14, when the workers' revolt erupted in Martinsburg, Garrett was in New York on business. As the uprising intensified in Baltimore, he received word that his mother Elizabeth, age 86, his “revered mama” as he had called her as a schoolboy, had fallen gravely ill. He rushed home and walked into her room minutes after she drew her last breath. Following her death, he responded to many condolence letters sent by longtime friends and colleagues, including Drexel Morgan & Company partner Egisto Fabbri, to whom Garrett wrote, “I have experienced in addition to my sad bereavement a very full share of difficulties, but my health has been good.”¹¹⁹ Lizzie, too, felt the pain of their mother's death. When asked to join the board of one of Elizabeth's favorite charities, the Union Protestant Infirmary, she declined, “because it would be a constant reminder of my deceased parent.”¹²⁰ As Garrett arranged the funeral for his mother, his vice presidents—King, who was living in Cincinnati and tending to B&O business there, and Keyser, in Baltimore—were left to deal with the labor uprising.

President Hayes declared martial law, but that didn't stop angry strikers from marching with clenched fists to Garrett's Mount Vernon Place home. Another group stormed Montebello, where the Garretts had taken cover. The rioters fired shots into the house. Mary later recalled how a bullet meant for her father had instead lodged

in a book in the Montebello library. The mob eventually subsided, and the Garretts escaped unharmed.

Despite the military backup, “strike fever” quickly spread eighty miles along the B&O line to Cumberland, where 500 townsfolk, miners, and migrant workers gathered around the striking rail workers, supporting their cause and urging them on. The widening disruptions moved quickly down the line to Camden Station in Baltimore—and then raged out of control. At 6:35 p.m. on July 20, “Big Sam,” Baltimore’s huge riot alarm bell, rang out, summoning the Maryland National Guard to crush the chaos. The timing could not have been worse. Thousands of pedestrians, mostly workers coming from and going to their jobs and sympathetic onlookers who gathered to show support, jammed Baltimore’s streets. As with the April 19, 1861, riot in that city during the first days of the Civil War, the showdown at B&O’s Camden Station quickly turned deadly as troops opened fire on Baltimore citizens.

Inside Camden Station, the mayor, the governor, police commissioners, and B&O vice president John King Jr. anxiously watched as an angry crowd of 15,000 gathered outside. King, accusing the strikers of destroying valuable B&O property, called the throng “the fiercest mob ever known in Baltimore,” a statement that more than sealed the city’s moniker of “Mobtown.”¹²¹ Two days later, he reported to Garrett that Baltimore’s “police commissioner [Harry] Gilmor has had productive results in controlling the riot. Over 200 arrests made in front of Camden Station. The crowd is composed of the worst elements of the city. Over 1,000 arrests have been made in different parts of the city.”¹²²

Since the start of the strike in Martinsburg, much public sympathy had come down on the side of the workers. The *Baltimore Sun* wrote in support of the beleaguered workers and their families: “They look famished and wild, and declare for starvation rather than have their people work for reduced wages. Better to starve outright, they say, than to die by slow starvation.”¹²³ The strikers held their position. As one of their leaders exclaimed: “The working people everywhere are with us. They know what it is to bring up a family on ninety cents a day, to live on beans and corn meal week in and week out, to run debt at the stores until you cannot get trusted any longer, to see the wife breaking down under deprivation and distress, and the children growing up sharp and fierce like wolves day after day because they don’t get enough to eat.”¹²⁴ Many midlevel B&O managers agreed, who, according to Keyser, “resented the reduction in wages at a time when the stockholders were being so liberally cared for.”¹²⁵

Others voiced different opinions. The *Railroad Gazette* at first sided with management, stating: “The community cannot let these men go unpunished. They have made themselves criminals deliberately and it must be made plain that they will be punished.”¹²⁶ But as the unrest continued, the *Railroad Gazette* softened its opin-

ions, explaining that B&O strikers complained Garrett had cut their hours to the point where “there was not enough work to keep them busy for six or even five days a week and they had to pay their home expenses plus their lodging between jobs.”¹²⁷

John King Jr. tried to neutralize public opinion. He met with Winfield Hancock, the famed Civil War general now heading up the Army’s Division of the Atlantic, who was in charge of sending in federal troops to quell the riot. Reporting back to Garrett on his meeting with Hancock, King said that he had demurred on the B&O’s role in the strike, instead shifting blame to others. “Railroad people have very little to do with the riots,” he rationalized to Hancock on July 23, meeting with him as the uprising intensified and spread. Instead, King insisted, “the rioters are composed of vagabonds and thieves,” and he assured Garrett that “I am satisfied that this was his [Hancock’s] own opinion.”¹²⁸

But the court of public opinion mattered little to Garrett; or to Maryland governor John Lee Carroll, whose family once had owned the mansion that gave the Mount Clare Shops their name; or to the city of Baltimore and the state of Maryland, which had invested millions in the B&O since its inception fifty years earlier. They were far more inclined to believe the *Baltimore Evening Bulletin*’s assessment of the strikers as “a rough element eager for disturbance; a proportion of mechanics either out of work or upon inadequate pay, whose sullen hearts rankled; and muttering and murmuring gangs of boys, almost outlaws, and ripe for any sort of disturbance.”¹²⁹ Allan Pinkerton, president of the largest detective agency in the country, more succinctly labeled the workers’ revolt as “communistic madness.”¹³⁰ Garrett stood firm, writing to John King Jr.: “We have the power. We have the public sentiment. We have the interests of the whole people in accord with us against a few.”¹³¹ Hugh Jewett, Garrett’s longtime friend and president of the Erie Railroad, cabled his condolences: “I sympathize with you. Sorry I am unable to help you. We are having serious difficulty on our own line. Am hopeful of soon controlling it.”¹³²

Newspapers quickly covered the escalating violence. “The Nation’s Woe,” the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* blared; “Bread or Blood,” chimed Little Rock’s *Daily Arkansas Gazette*; the *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* weighed in with “King Mob: The Strike Degenerating into Lawlessness”; the *Galveston Daily News* succinctly summarized its view of the conflict as “The Railroad Commune,” with the graphic subheads “The Great Conspiracy,” “Reign of Terror,” “Triumph of the Torch,” “Disastrous Defeat of the State Militia,” “Millions [of Dollars] of Magnificent Railroad Property Given to the Flames,” “Uncle Sam the Country’s Only Hope of Deliverance!”; Philadelphia’s *North American* pronounced, “Fire and Blood, Pillage, Confusion and Anarchy.”¹³³

The labor uprising seemed unstoppable and quickly spread to other sectors of the economy. “A local affair at its inception, the B&O strike influenced similar strikes

in fourteen states,” the *New York Times* noted. “In two weeks, it had assumed all the characteristics of a major national problem.”¹³⁴ African American wage earners in the South went on strike, demanding equal pay to whites; textile workers, coopers, brick makers, and cabinet workers around the country walked off the job.¹³⁵ “The Contagion Still Spreading,” the *San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin* warned on July 25. By that time, the revolt had spread to the Pennsylvania Railroad in Pittsburgh, which witnessed the worst violence. The strikers should be given “a rifle diet for a few days and see how they like that kind of bread,” Tom Scott threatened.¹³⁶

The militia at first declined to fire on the Pittsburgh militants, but, as at Camden Station in Baltimore, the confrontation soon got out of hand. Twenty people were killed and twenty-nine injured. John King Jr. cabled Garrett that “the rioters appear to have everything their own way and are reported as doing considerable damage.”¹³⁷ Keyser stated that in Pittsburgh, “a state of anarchy now prevailed; over three miles of cars and engines filled with oil, coke, and commodities of all kinds were soon in flames, and before morning property worth more than three million dollars had been destroyed.”¹³⁸ The bloodshed spread to Cincinnati, to Reading, Pennsylvania, and to Chicago, where the *Chicago Times* cried, “Terrors Reign: The Streets of Chicago Given Over to Howling Mobs of Thieves and Cutthroats.”¹³⁹ In East St. Louis, Illinois, 5,000 federal troops thwarted strikers.

And then—it ended. Within six weeks, “the most extensive and deplorable workman’s strike ever to take place in this or any other country,” according to the *Nation*, was over. Uncle Sam and the railroads declared victory over the “mobs of thieves and cutthroats.”¹⁴⁰ The country was on edge, a tinderbox of tensions, with many Americans struggling through the long, cruel economic depression while tycoons, such as Garrett, continued to enjoy their opulent lifestyles. “The mine was already prepared, a spark only was necessary to cause an explosion,” an observer at the time noted. “That was supplied by the managers of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.”¹⁴¹

After the military departed, Baltimore city officials assessed the damage to both property and people. “The police began looking around for the killed and the wounded,” the *Baltimore American* reported. “On the right of the spot where the officers were standing was the body of a young man lying on the pavement, his forehead crushed and a pool of blood beside him.” It turned out that the man was neither a striker nor a soldier, but a bystander looking for his brother in the crowd. In the nearby hospital, five men lay dying, surrounded by friends; “clergy too were present to administer the last rites to those whose lives were despaired of.”¹⁴²

By the fall of 1877, most B&O strikers returned to work without the demands they had fought for. Garrett assured loyal laborers that they would continue on with their jobs. While Garrett had been protective of his overworked employees

during the war, refusing Stanton's request to use the B&O more extensively in the great troop movement, stepping out of line to strike against the company was a different matter. Garrett had been uncompromising throughout the entire series of events, unsympathetic to rebellious workers and more than willing to bring the full force of the federal government upon them. "Let them see that the arm of the law is extended with instantaneous effect upon them," he wrote to King.¹⁴³ Garrett, like other railroad presidents dealing with the labor uprising, had "displayed a hair-trigger willingness to call in authorities and an enormous confidence in their [the railroad presidents'] ability to manipulate them to serve company policy."¹⁴⁴ Allan Pinkerton wrote in his 1878 account of the affair, *Strikes, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives*, that "the first gun of the Commune" was stopped in its tracks.¹⁴⁵ Pinkerton must have been dismayed when, in December 1877, the American Workingmen's Party flaunted its political leanings and changed its name to the Socialist Labor Party of America.

With Garrett focused on his mother's funeral, Keyser handled the final negotiations with the strikers. The *Railroad Gazette* reported that Keyser resolved the issue by providing company boardinghouse accommodations for workers between train runs, effective August 30. As to the "short hours," that Garrett had initiated in the months leading up to the outbreak, Keyser only promised workers that "a force sufficient to do the work of the road will be maintained, but no more. Each engine in use will have a regular crew on each division and houses will be provided at the end of each division."¹⁴⁶ Garrett also made a few concessions, namely that a crewman would not be called to work more than an hour before a train's departure and would be paid a quarter of a day's wages even if the train were cancelled.

In 1880, Garrett established the B&O Employees Relief Fund, which would become the charitable model for wage earners in the industry. "The motives which prompt a railroad company to wish its employees insured are partly philanthropic. . . . It may be held true that the men who run these corporations are not without a touch of altruism," a commentator later wrote of the trend started by the B&O. But "the managers and directors of the corporation . . . have been slow in introducing devices to lessen the dangers besetting the pathway of their employees."¹⁴⁷ The B&O created an endowment, and employees made a small monthly contribution to the relief fund. In turn, they were guaranteed up to a full year's wages for sickness and indefinite time for recovery from job-related accidents.¹⁴⁸

In the 1883 *Annual Report*, Garrett wrote of the early success of the Employees Relief Fund. In its first five years, it had made 24,776 individual payments, for a total of \$549,263.01. "Much attention has been given to sanitary conditions and drinking water along the route," Garrett stated. "Large quantities of the best medical remedies, under careful medical advice, were distributed with excellent results."¹⁴⁹ But Garrett did not learn his lesson about pay inequities between stockholders and

the workers who made dividends possible. In October 1877, he approved a 3 percent dividend for stocks on the Main Stem of the B&O.

After the strike, Garrett tallied up the material losses and, in September, demanded reparations for B&O equipment destroyed on the lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad. John King Jr. wrote to Tom Scott, enumerating the damage: “Please inform as to what settlement your company proposes to make for these cars,” since ninety-two boxcars and twenty-eight gondolas had been burned.¹⁵⁰ The Pennsylvania Railroad had no intention of offering any reimbursement, insisting that the B&O cars “had been destroyed by the mob on our ground at Pittsburgh and I suggest application to Allegheny County for payment for property destroyed.”¹⁵¹ The Pennsylvania Railroad finally ended up paying the B&O “\$12,158.71 for scrap iron from the wreck of the cars,” far below their replacement cost.¹⁵²

The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 jolted Americans. An estimated 100,000 workers nationwide joined in the violent revolt. The uprising publicly revealed the dark side of the new industrial age, the horrors of the industrial workplace, and the dangers of laborers’ unacknowledged rage and fury.¹⁵³ Americans confronted the price they paid for a prosperous nation: a country full of low-paid, expendable, and exploited workers and, worse, great disparities of wealth. For those who revolted, the uprising unfortunately struck a blow to their nascent labor movement, which suffered from a lack of organization and cohesiveness in the 1870s. Over the next decades, labor unions slowly gained strength, particularly the Knights of Labor. With its moderate policies and rational voice in exerting workers’ rights, this union calmed Americans’ fear of communist-inspired organized labor.¹⁵⁴ Other violent strikes would follow—the Haymarket Massacre of 1886, the Homestead Strike of 1892, and the Pullman Strike of 1894—but none would shake the nation to its core as did the first, the Great Railroad Strike of 1877.

That year, Junius Morgan made one of his periodic trips to the United States. While in the country, Morgan stayed with the Garretts, and John Garrett hosted a dinner party for him in Baltimore.¹⁵⁵ On November 8, four months after the unsettling labor events, ninety-four of the nation’s most prominent financiers, industrialists, and politicians met at the famed Delmonico’s Restaurant in New York City to honor Junius Morgan for “his great service . . . in upholding its [the nation’s] credit and its honor in the commercial capital of the world.” The guest list at Delmonico’s, including Garrett, represented a Who’s Who of those really running the United States, “the wealth and brains of the Union,” as the *New York Times* gushed.¹⁵⁶ The article detailed how New York Democratic governor Samuel Tilden presided over the self-congratulatory gaiety, reminding the guests—with a wink of an eye—that “the owners of colossal capitals and managers of colossal capitals” might think they were working for themselves but, he informed them, they are “chiefly working for

that public.” They were the captains of industry, the mighty industrialists and financiers, the great lords who had brought the transportation revolution and unprecedented prosperity to the nation. Tilden reassured them that although it might seem to “all human eyes” that those gathered were self-serving, let there be no doubt that “a wise and beneficent over-ruling Providence . . . inures to the benefit of the masses.” He ended by declaring to the audience that “human society is better because we have existed.” Garrett, too, was a featured speaker. He was now much admired by his fellow industrialists for his hard-line tactics during the strike. Garrett roused the audience by endorsing the “payment of the national and State debts, and instanced Baltimore’s history as an example to legislators,” the newspaper reported.

The assemblage of titans and tycoons, unequaled “at any gathering in history in the Metropolis,” according to the *New York Times*, must have seemed to Garrett to be a salve against the recent unpleasantness of the labor uprising. Being among his peers, the crème de la crème of the country, and hearing his colleagues’ reassuring words reaffirmed that he had taken the right stand in all his actions, from increasing his stockholders’ dividends and slashing his workers’ wages to calling on the full force of the government to quash the rebellion. The entire forty-five days of violence and killing had been inconsequential, he must have reasoned, as Tilden and the august gathering soothed his soul that evening. So inconsequential, in fact, that in the B&O’s *Annual Report* for 1877 and in the minute books of the Board of Directors for their fall meetings that year, there was not one word about the strike. It was, perhaps, most revealing of Garrett’s attitude about the uprising, as well as a confirmation of his absolute, undisputed control of the B&O. Garrett had obliterated the violent forty-five days from the official record of the B&O—and his own conscience. He could reassure himself that his workers were better off because he existed.

His Willpower Remained Unimpaired

1878–1884

ON A BALMY JUNE AFTERNOON in 1881, the B&O's new 324-foot, side-wheeler train car ferry "Canton" slowly made its way through Baltimore Harbor, heading toward the enormous warehouses and wharves of Locust Point. On board, John W. Garrett, his wife Rachel, and daughter Mary sat in the presidential car, "Maryland," watching as the skyline of Baltimore's main transportation hub drew closer. When the "Canton" nudged to shore, Robert II and Harry stepped up to greet the travelers. The reunited family boarded Garrett's disembarked car for the short ride around the harbor to Camden Station. Guns fired a salute at nearby Fort McHenry. Much of Baltimore was on hand, including "a large number of prominent businessmen representing nearly all business interests, the Board of Trade, the President and Professors of Johns Hopkins University, and Mayor Latrobe on behalf of the city," the *New York Times* reported. "Six hearty cheers were given for President Garrett."¹ Garrett imperiously waved to the assembled crowd and gave a short talk, reminiscing about his twenty-three years heading the B&O and the company's "phenomenal growth." The crowd gathered around for a half hour to shake his hand, and then the family headed to Montebello.² Maryland's royal family had come home after a year in Europe, their fourth lengthy trip abroad in seven years, to restore Garrett's health.

Garrett had never fully recovered from his illness eight years earlier. The 1877 labor strike and ongoing pressures from the B&O had continued to afflict him and quickly obliterated any semblance of normal health regained after his first European tour in 1873–1874. In the ensuing years, Keyser observed, "Garrett's physical condition had seriously impaired his mental vigor, which was, from time to time, conspicuously evidenced by his erratic and vacillating course, altogether foreign to his nature." During these years, particularly following the 1877 labor strike, Garrett increasingly withdrew from many social obligations. His appearance had changed dramatically. His hair had turned grey and he grew a beard, also grey. He

no longer resembled the robust, domineering leader of his early postwar B&O presidency.

In March 1875, just a few months after returning from his fifteen-month journey, his doctor recommended more rest, and Garrett and Rachel again sailed to Europe. Garrett authorized John King Jr., “to be president *pro tem* during my absence from Baltimore.”³ This time the Garretts stayed abroad for six months. Three years later, W. C. Cattell, the president of Lafayette College, Garrett’s alma mater, wrote that the college wanted to bestow an honorary degree on Garrett at the 1878 spring commencement. Garrett declined “on account of constant and severe pressure of business,” citing commercial and national economic anxieties as the long depression, which began with the Panic of 1873, continued into its fifth year. He expressed hope that he might do so “at some point in the future when the complex and laborious duties in the management of railroads and the present condition of the country will be under more favored auspices.”⁴

In June 1878, he and Rachel decided on the spur of the moment to sail once more to Europe. Garrett wrote to Mary, who was staying in West Orange, New Jersey, with a family friend, retired general Randolph B. Marcy—father-in-law of Garrett’s longtime friend, General George McClellan—“to immediately leave for New York,” where she would join her parents for the journey.⁵ This time, the family stayed abroad for three months. The many trips seemed to have little effect toward a desired cure. Nonetheless, in 1880, on doctor’s orders, Garrett, Rachel, and Mary once again set sail for Europe. As with other attempts to regain his health, the results of the latest excursion were mixed. Keyser visited Garrett in Paris and “was much concerned to see how he had changed and aged since we parted.”⁶ The Garretts returned to Baltimore a year later.

Mary, too, fell ill during these years and began experiencing the same mental symptoms as her father. While in London with her parents in 1878, her father had insisted that she see Dr. John Hughling Jackson. The famed British neurologist specialized in epilepsy, although there is no evidence that Mary was afflicted with the disease. More than likely, Mary suffered from the same depression that affected her father. In addition, she had suffered a breakdown in 1879, after taking the Harvard entrance exam, which served as an academic benchmark for women hoping to enter college. Although she could not have attended the all-male institution, she had hoped to continue on to college, as many of her friends were doing. Garrett’s once-robust and energetic daughter—who loved to gallop through the fields of Montebello on the estate’s thoroughbreds, had served as “Papa’s secretary” while accompanying her father on his earlier travels, and eagerly immersed herself in B&O business—had found the intervening years to be tumultuous, sapping her of good health and optimism toward her future. Her family’s great wealth had offered her status and

luxury, but she now had come face-to face with the realities of the expectations of her autocratic father. John W. Garrett did not just rule the B&O. He also dominated the lives of his grown children.

Mary came of age after the Civil War, a time far different and more expansive than previous eras, when many restrictions were placed on women. The war had killed and maimed a whole generation of men, particularly marriageable men. As job opportunities and chances for higher education increased for women after the war, societal barriers against such activities began to fall. Young women of Mary's age, in their twenties, saw before them a wider world of possibilities beyond the expected roles of marriage and motherhood, without the stigma that came from not following traditional paths.

But not for Mary. For every door to adventure that her friends found open, Mary faced only impediments. And the greatest of all was her controlling father. John Garrett, who had once expanded her horizons through journeys abroad and association with high society, now pulled in the reins. She longed to enter the world of higher education. "I begged my father that I should be allowed to go to college," she wrote, but Garrett quickly quashed those plans.⁷ She wanted to travel to Europe on her own to take classes with her former teacher, Mademoiselle Kummer, who now ran a school in Paris. Again her father refused. "Papa would gladly, if not more so, see me buried as have me go and I do not think there is the faintest chance of ever getting his consent," she wrote to a friend.⁸

He also impeded her interest in marriage. Wealthy Gilded Age families valued their daughters as a way to forge partnerships with other powerful families, and, as the daughter of a wealthy tycoon, Mary ranked high in the marriage market. Several men courted her, but her father threw up roadblocks. One suitor in particular, a "man who would become a great success," Mary later wrote, had interested her, but Garrett apparently did not share Mary's enthusiasm for the young man's potential. "My father did not intend for me to marry him, or anyone else," she lamented of the doomed romance.⁹ Then again, perhaps she followed the path many women of her generation had chosen and preferred not to marry. Although Mary had examples of seemingly enviable Gilded Age marriages close to home—her two brothers and their socially glamorous wives—she had less-than-enthusiastically described marriage as "nothing else than a more or less durable connection between male and female after the birth of the offspring."¹⁰

Mary and her father were not the only ones to fall ill. Garrett's sister Lizzie also suffered from the same condition. "Please tell me the cause of Aunt Lizzie's depression," Mary asked her mother.¹¹ Mary and Rachel enjoyed a warm and close relationship. Since Garrett tightly controlled every aspect of his daughter's life, including her finances, she often conspired with her mother to find ways to get extra cash to buy

what Mary euphemistically called her “investments”—usually a piece of ancient statuary, fabric for a new dress, or presents for friends or servants.¹² Her investments did not come cheap. In 1882, she implored her mother to convince Garrett to give her \$20,000 to purchase *The Two Cardinals*, one in a series of “Cardinal” paintings in which French painter Jehan-Georges Vibert playfully poked fun at the Roman Catholic Church.¹³

Mary gained a bit of independence in her twenties and rented an apartment in New York City, where she regularly attended the theater with friends. Over the years, she had taught herself to read and speak Greek, writing to her mother that she had seen *Oedipus* performed in that language: “It was one of the greatest pleasures I’ve had in a long time and I would not have given up any small knowledge of the Grecian language for a great deal.”¹⁴ When her parents traveled without their daughter, Mary sent daily letters—sometime two or three—to Rachel. “I looked for your letter today and it did not arrive. Please write more often,” Mary implored.¹⁵ She longed to stay connected with the business of the B&O. “Please send railroad news!” she often pleaded when writing to her parents as they traveled.¹⁶

Whatever her hopes for the future or however few moments of independence she may have enjoyed, Mary’s path already had been determined. She was to stay close to her father, as “Papa’s secretary.” She longed for independence while, at the same time, she wanted to fulfill her obligations to her father. Garrett’s insistence on keeping his daughter close to home was, perhaps, a backhanded compliment. Early on, Garrett recognized that his daughter displayed business skills not apparent in Robert II or Harry. He often expressed to friends that neither son “had shown any real disposition to work”; an observer commented that Garrett hoped that “when the responsibility was placed on them they might develop the old Garrett spirit and turn out all right, but the fear that they might fail haunted him day and night and he could not overcome it.”¹⁷ Mary remained Garrett’s one consolation among his children—bright, capable, knowledgeable about and always interested in her father’s business. He came to rely on her common sense and predilection for the machinations of railroading. By all rights she should have been her father’s heir to the B&O throne. Unfortunately, societal restrictions forbade a woman from ascending to such a position. Mary would remain—at least during her father’s lifetime—an obedient daughter, never straying too far from his side and watching as her brothers were rewarded for being sons and handed coveted positions with the B&O and RG&S.

Harry and Robert II, however, might not have been any more pleased with their predestined futures than their sister. Just as social dictates for upper-class women thwarted Mary, so, too, were Garrett’s sons unable to escape their larger-than-life father’s expectations for them to follow in his footsteps. Perhaps they wished for something different from the future that awaited them. Robert II, the once-rebellious

16-year-old who had defied his father and run off to join the enemy, Robert E. Lee, in 1863, was, two decades later, very much changed. After Robert's four-year stint as president of the Valley Railroad, Garrett brought his oldest son to B&O headquarters in 1875. Four years later, Garrett made a move that, perhaps more than any previous decision, would seal the fate of the B&O: he began grooming Robert as his successor. In 1879, he appointed his son as third vice president and, in 1881, as first vice president and a board director, all positions for which Robert was temperamentally unsuited, professionally unqualified, and, more than likely, did not want. Garrett kept close watch on his son's every move and tried to impress upon him the B&O's importance. "Our whole country is full of the wisdom and usefulness of our enterprises," he wrote to his heir apparent.¹⁸ Garrett also knew of his son's vulnerable nature—insecure and introverted—and his inability to grasp the realities of the brutal world of railroading.

With Robert's ascension in the company, vice presidents King and Keyser did not like what they saw, and both departed from the B&O. After Garrett's return from Europe in 1881, he announced King's and Keyser's resignations to the board. "After continuous railroad service of 27 years from ticket agent to First Vice President of the company," according to the *New York Times*, King left because of "the present condition of his health and repeated warnings from his physician."¹⁹ Soon thereafter, King returned to railroading, but not at the B&O.²⁰ Keyser, who had also suffered ill health, particularly his breakdown after the 1877 labor strike, put that entire industry behind him "to devote his attention entirely to private affairs."²¹ Other top officials also left the company during this time. During Garrett's 1880–1881 absence, the masters of transportation and machinery both quit, leaving Robert II in charge in Baltimore, while John Garrett ran the company from Europe on his curative trips.²²

Robert's move up to vice president affirmed—in no uncertain terms—John Garrett's intentions to create a railroad dynasty, pursuing what his own father had planned for his sons at RG&S and what Commodore Vanderbilt had done with his son. William H. Vanderbilt now headed the Vanderbilt empire after his father's death in 1877. William Vanderbilt gained fame—and fear—for his sharp, preemptive business strikes and hard-line, no-nonsense approach to railroading. "The railroads are not built for the benefit of the 'dear public,'" he asserted. "That is all nonsense. They are built by men who invest their money and expect a fair percentage on the same."²³ In his eight years heading the sprawling Vanderbilt web of steamships and railroads, William—competent, competitive, and ambitious to expand the Vanderbilt empire—vastly increased the company's value and doubled his personal wealth from \$90 million to \$200 million, making him one of the richest men in the world.²⁴

Unfortunately for the B&O, Robert Garrett II was no William H. Vanderbilt. Robert preferred frequenting his clubs to his office at B&O headquarters and enhancing his famously fashionable wardrobe rather than the B&O's coffers. He reputedly owned 140 pairs of trousers and proudly wore the violet named in his honor on his lapel. Yet his father, with his grandiose ambitions for his son, threw him to the lions in the most bloodthirsty business of the time. Robert's anxiety and apprehension became apparent. Coming across a group of B&O workers one day, Robert said: "I suppose that this work is sometimes irksome to you men. Well, we all have to work. I have to work hard sometimes and very often I fret and chafe under it. I often wished I had learned some trade. But in this world, we all have our responsibilities to shoulder, and we have to make the best of it."²⁵

Harry, too, had to make the best of the future his father had chosen for him. As Robert II's career veered toward the B&O, Harry continued with RG&S, which was still successful after his grandfather had started it eighty years earlier. John Garrett hoped to continue the family dynasty at RG&S and prepared his second son for the duty ahead. Not yet comfortable to let Harry run the firm alone, Garrett made sure it stayed under the watchful eye of his longtime friend and the firm's general manager, Charles Nitze, who collaborated with John Garrett on major decisions. Like Robert, Harry, too, often was on the receiving end of his father's stinging missives. Concerned about a looming lawsuit involving a mine on a property owned by RG&S, Garrett ordered Harry to "look into the whole history of this issue. What interest has the House [RG&S] in this mine? What money has the House paid out? Money and time are wasted. I hope all such 'investments' will be avoided in the future."²⁶

Harry headed the firm's international banking division and had a tertiary involvement with the B&O, since RG&S and the B&O continued their decades-old symbiotic and mutually beneficial financial relationship. Harry joined the B&O Board of Directors and the Baltimore Stock Board, which later became the Baltimore Stock Exchange. He enjoyed spending time at his ever-expanding Evergreen mansion with his wife Alice and their three sons—Robert III, John Work Garrett II, and Horatio—and his impressive collections of art, rare books, and coins, for which he was gaining national fame. Outings on the Chesapeake Bay in his sleek schooner *Gleam* also occupied much of Harry's time. Nonetheless, with their father frequently leaving for Europe to find an elusive cure for his illness, Robert and Harry had little choice but to stay involved with the businesses that supported the Garrett empire.

Despite his visible mental and physical decline and his journeys abroad, John Garrett continued uncontested, although often in absentia, at the helm of the B&O, making critical decisions; managing day-to-day minutia; overseeing existing

projects; and starting new, more costly ones—all the while taking on more debt. Within days of returning from Europe in 1881, he lambasted Keyser for letting things slide in his absence—possibly prompting Keyser’s resignation soon thereafter. “There has been much idleness and neglect of duty on the part of a number of men, clerks and others at Camden Station,” Garrett wrote. “Please inquire into it. Also—there has been a waste of time at Mount Clare in the past few days, while the parties continue on the rolls.”²⁷

In the public’s eye, the B&O remained as strong and steadfast as ever—just as Garrett hoped it would. When Baltimore celebrated its 150th anniversary in 1879, Garrett made sure Baltimore’s largest employer was represented in full force: several thousand B&O workers, ten bands, and thirty wagons featuring dramatic tableaux marched in the parade.²⁸ Garrett continued his building projects, announcing in July 1881, a month after his latest return from Europe, that “the third great elevator at Locust Point will be completed by August 20” and a new steamship line was being added to the ten already sailing from that commercial hub. “A new line is being built at Barrow-in-Furness [Cambria, England] and will soon be added primarily for the transport of cattle and other livestock.”²⁹

Garrett continued to take great pride in the lecture series for B&O employees and their families that he had started after the 1877 labor strike. By 1882, the series included prominent professors from Johns Hopkins University, who lectured on such subjects as “How Skulls and Backbones Are Built,” “On Fermentation,” “How We Move,” and “Some Curious Kinds of Animal Locomotion.” Garrett arranged to have the lectures printed and added to the Mount Clare Shops’ reading room, which he had established in 1869. He also introduced each lecture and was pleased to report that the events “drew unexpectedly large audiences.”³⁰

The B&O Board of Directors, satisfied with Garrett’s usual optimistic annual reports, voted year after year to keep him in the position that had led to the company’s expansion and to lucrative dividends—blind to or unaware or unquestioning of Garrett’s “dangerous mode of financiering,” as Keyser had later described it. Unlike the Pennsylvania Railroad’s board, which put the brakes on Thomson’s and Scott’s expansion plans during the board’s 1874 investigation into that company’s finances, the B&O board took no such action with Garrett’s costly projects, which unfolded one right after the other. Keyser, among many others, wondered how Garrett could keep his position, election after election, with a board composed “of such practical men with such large interests at stake.” Keyser reasoned that “the answer is to be found in the quieting influence of a regular ten percent dividend coupled with the confidence naturally created by a long series of years of prosperity.”³¹

Besides the “quieting influence” of lucrative dividends and seemingly “prosperous” years, one is left to wonder about the B&O board’s lack of curiosity about the

company's true financial health—or the directors' possible duplicity in maintaining Garrett's charade. After battling the public/private board for years, Garrett had finally made sure he could count on enough allies to ensure unquestioning loyalty to his projects. William Findley Burns, Garrett's lifelong friend since their days together at Lafayette College and now a B&O director, took over as chair of the influential finance committee after Johns Hopkins's death in 1873. The board members, all well-known, successful Maryland businessmen, should have been more astute, but there is little evidence in official B&O documents that they doubted Garrett's bookkeeping or looked too critically at the *Annual Reports*, which never hinted at serious financial problems. Perhaps the board's confidence in Garrett's acknowledged power and political connections in the state blinded them to the long-term consequences of trying to maintain a debt-ridden company. As the *New York Times* later observed of Garrett's undisputed supremacy, "in John W. Garrett's days, the 'autocrat,' as John W. was known, did what he wanted to do and then called his directors together to endorse his work."³²

An Irrational Act of Spite and Defiance

Now in his early sixties, Garrett's lifetime pattern of competition and one-upmanship, first developed forty years earlier while working for his father and fine-tuned in his two decades heading the B&O, had not abated. Nor had his jealousy and decades-long rivalry with the Pennsylvania Railroad, although much had changed with his opponents to the north. Tom Scott, Thomson's successor, resigned in 1880 after suffering a massive stroke; he died the following year at age 58. Even with his two most formidable foes now gone, replaced by the much less fearsome George Brooke Roberts, Garrett could not let the longtime rivalry just across Maryland's northern border rest. "His willpower remained unimpaired," Keyser noted sadly, "leading him to do, and persist in doing things which those around him advised against, and which ended disastrously."³³

Perhaps the greatest of these missteps was Garrett's determination to connect the B&O tracks between Washington, DC, and New York, which meant once again forging his way through his enemy's territory in Pennsylvania—as he had done earlier with the line to Pittsburgh—and into the most heavily congested and contested railroad region of the country. The competition for the New York market ranked as one of Garrett's fieriest battles with the Pennsylvania Railroad, dating back to the first years of his B&O presidency. No longer showing the caution that defined his earlier years of expansion, Garrett pushed ahead to get to New York. It would not end well—at least in his lifetime. With the B&O's debt piling up, other capital projects draining its coffers, myriad major building and equipment ventures in the works,

and Garrett himself in a dubious mental state, his decision to push ahead to get to New York represented “an irrational act of spite and defiance after years of being bested by the Pennsylvania.”³⁴

The idea of a Washington, DC–Baltimore–New York route was not new, of course. During the Civil War and its immediate aftermath, there had been various proposals to build a federally sponsored “air line” railroad in this corridor to overcome the difficulties of the disjointed existing lines—with all of those plans seemingly created for the benefit of the Pennsylvania Railroad and all of them quashed by Garrett and his allies. But for Garrett, such outdated routes and endless battles with B&O competitors to the north would not do in the postwar commercial frenzy.

Garrett had first announced his intention to build a “new, double-tracked first class road” between Baltimore and New York at the January 11, 1871, board meeting.³⁵ He asserted at the time that his competitors between Baltimore and New York had never been interested in “the vast enterprise of Baltimore and the Baltimore and Ohio,” adding that it was “gratifying to state there is no reason to believe that there will be no difficulty in securing capital from individual resources.” But a few years after his announcement, his assessment of the B&O’s ability to financially support such an extensive project proved to be overly optimistic, and Garrett again found that he had to jury-rig his way to New York via existing lines.

As had happened when getting B&O tracks to Chicago, Garrett already trailed behind his competitors in reaching New York. Throughout his B&O presidency, Garrett’s orientation had been primarily to the west, a natural direction, considering RG&S’s and the B&O’s antebellum commercial ventures to trans-Appalachia and beyond, and, after the Civil War, to the south, where Garrett had miscalculated the profitability of Southern markets and his ability to extend B&O tracks through Virginia to the North Carolina border. At his eastern end, Garrett remained firmly rooted in Baltimore and devoted to building up the city’s port and industries. He viewed New York as a competitor and a secondary market, which he was content to reach through connecting lines. Garrett’s slow realization of New York’s importance left him a latecomer to what was already an overcrowded market, faced with all the inevitable challenges of establishing physical facilities and finding a commercial foothold. Nonetheless, he persisted.

For years, he had to contend with the hodge-podge of New York–Washington, DC, traffic that laboriously flowed over a route consisting of three connecting railroads—one independent railroad between New York and Philadelphia, another independent line between Philadelphia and Baltimore, and the B&O between Baltimore and Washington, DC. The Pennsylvania Railroad began working its way into the New York market, first by taking control of the New York–Philadelphia segment in 1871, and then by opening its own Baltimore–Washington, DC, line two

years later. That left only the middle segment—from Philadelphia to Baltimore—in independent outside hands. This line, operated by the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad, handled both the B&O's and the Pennsylvania's traffic neutrally, on its own trains. So, in fact, did the Pennsylvania Railroad—owned New York–Philadelphia segment—for a while, at least. The Pennsylvania Railroad increasingly became less cooperative with the B&O, however. After Garrett's invasion of the Pennsylvania's private domain in Pittsburgh in 1871, as well as his irritating entry into the Chicago market and subsequent rate cut three years later, the Pennsylvania's decision makers grew less tolerant and made trouble for him at Philadelphia: first by delaying his New York trains, then by shutting him off from New York completely.

Garrett found a way around the Pennsylvania Railroad's New York–Philadelphia obstructionism by working out a joint arrangement with the newly opened (in 1876) Delaware and Bound Brook Railroad (soon absorbed by the Philadelphia and Reading system, another Pennsylvania competitor), which, together with the Central Railroad of New Jersey, operated a through route, bypassing the Pennsylvania Railroad's line. Back in business in time for the 1876 Centennial Exposition, the B&O and its allies advertised the “new route” to New York, and Garrett cut passenger fares from New York to Philadelphia to \$2.65, ten cents lower than the rate on the Pennsylvania Railroad.³⁶ At last Garrett again had a link to New York that avoided his hated competitor. As before, both he and the Pennsylvania Railroad remained dependent on the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad to handle the Philadelphia–Baltimore part of their New York–Washington, DC, traffic, as well as any business from B&O's western lines that involved Philadelphia or New York.

The pressures to get the best of the Pennsylvania Railroad and find a viable connection to New York took their toll on Garrett's health. The *New York Times* later recalled an incident when Garrett was trying to patch together his northeastern route. He had gone to New York to talk with an old friend, Harry McComb, an Illinois Central Railroad executive, who had helped to expose the Crédit Mobilier of America fraud scandal to the *New York Sun* in 1872. Garrett had dealt with McComb in 1880, when McComb was trying to promote a new Philadelphia–Baltimore line based on the charter of an obscure Delaware short line called the Delaware Western, and Garrett had joined McComb's syndicate at that time. Garrett thought McComb would be an ally in the B&O's push to New York. Walking down Broadway, Garrett saw a man approaching who appeared to be McComb. Garrett heartily greeted him with a slap on the back and led him by the elbow to the dining room of the Brunswick Hotel. After awkwardly conversing on the subject at hand and imbibing several glasses of champagne, the guest stammered that he had no idea what Garrett was talking about. At that moment, the real Harry McComb

walked through the door. “The only reason Garrett didn’t faint,” the *Times* reasoned, “is he didn’t know how.”³⁷ The episode revealed Garrett’s still-delicate state of mind. Soon thereafter, on doctor’s orders, Garrett sailed with Rachel and Mary for what would become their year-long trip to Europe in 1880–1881.

New worries soon arose, especially for the future of the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. While Garrett was abroad, word began to circulate that the fearsome Jay Gould, recently elected to the Central Railroad of New Jersey’s board, intended to build a new line between Philadelphia and Baltimore, which presumably would link to New York over the same route the B&O was now using. The rumors sent ripples of sell-offs and buyouts through the industry. The PW&B feared losing its primacy in the region and put 213,000 shares of its stock on the market. As with his earlier trips abroad, Garrett remained directly involved, from a distance, in B&O business. With the future of the PW&B in jeopardy, Garrett joined Gould in a syndicate—which included Russell Sage, August Belmont Sr., and John Jacob Astor—to buy 51 percent of PW&B stock at \$70 a share. The Pennsylvania Railroad and its new president, George Brooke Roberts, did not publicly jump into the fray, preferring to watch quietly from the sidelines as the spectacle unfolded.

In early 1881, the Garrett-Gould syndicate thought it now had the crucial PW&B in the fold. Garrett, no doubt giddy, boasted to all who would listen about his triumph—one of the few—over the Pennsylvania Railroad. Little did he or the other members of his syndicate suspect that in early March, their rival railroad’s stealthy planners, primarily in the person of its aggressive vice president, Alexander J. Cassatt, had outbid them and corralled 92 percent of the PW&B stock and thus had ownership of the company. Outfoxed again and publicly humiliated by his premature victory announcement, Garrett was more determined than ever to get to New York.

While still in Europe, on March 21, 1881, Garrett sent orders to buy the Delaware Western Railroad that he had helped McComb acquire a year earlier. The Delaware and Pennsylvania charters for this otherwise unpromising and marginal little line would provide the corporate base for a new railroad Garrett hoped to build from Baltimore to Philadelphia, where he could collaborate with his recent partners, the Philadelphia and Reading system and the Central Railroad of New Jersey, to get as close as he could on his own to the New York market, which meant a site across New York Harbor, on the New Jersey shore. He had hoped to build all the way into New York, but J. Pierpont Morgan, who abhorred redundant railroad projects, managed to stop him at Philadelphia. Still, cost was no matter for Garrett. He was determined to get to New York, using whatever was necessary.

It took some time to lay out the route and negotiate an \$11 million loan from Baring Brothers in London to finance it. In 1883, Garrett and his family sailed again to Europe for another curative trip, but—as with all his previous journeys—B&O

business came first. According to the *New York Times*, “he spent much time negotiating the loan necessary for his company to extend its main line to Philadelphia and connect it with the Reading system reaching New York.”³⁸ With the loan secured, construction finally started in Wilmington, Delaware, in early 1883.

Afterward it was even slower going. Unsurprisingly, the Pennsylvania Railroad made certain that the B&O would have the maximum possible political difficulty entering Philadelphia—but this was not the only problem. Although blocked from building between Philadelphia and New York Harbor, Garrett still needed to establish his own waterfront facilities there. With virtually all the land already occupied, the B&O faced a weak alternative: to build an access line to Staten Island—including an impressively large iron swing bridge—where the company could establish a cramped terminal on the harbor at St. George. Despite the controversy and cost overruns to reach New York, Garrett initiated a dizzying number of major bridge projects: a remarkably engineered and spectacular 6,346-foot-long iron truss bridge over the Susquehanna River; numerous other impressive truss bridges, and a 9,600-foot-long combination trestle and iron swing bridge to cross the Arthur Kill to reach Staten Island. Garrett lived long enough to see only the first year’s work on the New York project, which eventually fell to his successors to finish.

From Shacks to Pinnacled Palaces

If Garrett couldn’t always win at building tracks into key markets, he excelled at other types of building, creating some of the most significant and memorable railroad architecture of the day—his bricks and mortar legacy. Much of the renowned B&O railroad architecture that would be constructed at the turn of the twentieth century and later was the result of Garrett’s vision, beginning in the 1870s. While the internal machinations and the account books of the B&O might have been less than exemplary, the B&O’s outward aspects—its architecture and public image—during the Garrett era conveyed a far different appearance, exuding strength, innovation, elegance, and historical importance.

Garrett’s interest in creating beautiful structures for the B&O paralleled his personal obsession, after the Civil War, with buying his own elegant, historic properties in Maryland: his three Mount Vernon Place mansions, plus Montebello and Evergreen. In his mind, the lines no doubt blurred between beautifying his own real estate and the B&O’s, which, for all intents and purposes, Garrett considered to be an extension of his personal domain. He had the same architectural grandeur in mind for B&O buildings as those the company’s earlier architects—Jacob Small Jr., John R. Niernsee, and Benjamin H. Latrobe II—had created in the first decades of the company. B&O engineers and surveyors might have conquered mountains and

gorges to lay tracks over and through defiant topography, but Garrett insisted on adding aesthetic touches to the mid- and late-century buildings and structures that accompanied such amazing engineering feats. During his tenure, B&O architects converted all-too-familiar dilapidated railroad stations and shops from “shacks to pinnacled palaces.”³⁹

For this, in 1871 Garrett had hired E. Francis Baldwin, one of the most prolific, but often unheralded, architects of the late nineteenth century. Baldwin had first set the B&O architectural standard with his elegant hotels in Western Maryland. Baldwin’s position as head architect for the B&O would continue for the next quarter century, during the company’s rapid post–Civil War expansion and into the next years of the new century. While most railroads hired topnotch architects only for their most public buildings, Garrett commissioned Baldwin for the full range of B&O structures, from elegant hotels and attractive stations to repair shops, warehouses, and grain elevators.

Baldwin, like many aspiring architects, got his start in the early years of his profession as a draughtsman, finding a position in the firm of Baltimore’s premier architects, Niernsee and Neilson, the same firm that created many of the urban palaces belonging to Baltimore’s elite on Mount Vernon Place, as well as the early B&O stations; he later formed a partnership with Josias Pennington in 1883.⁴⁰ Baldwin created what would become the iconic B&O style of architecture. In Maryland alone, he designed fifty-four B&O stations; six hotel-resorts, including the successful Deer Park and Oakland Hotels; seven freight stations; ten elevators and grain stations; and twenty-two shops, yards, and rights-of-way. Only a few, however, are still extant.⁴¹

Seizing on Baldwin’s flair for creating a unique style, Garrett set aside the B&O’s fiscal difficulties and started a flurry of hotel construction beyond Western Maryland. Baldwin built several station hotels along B&O lines, another Garrett decision that defied logic, since such hotels were becoming obsolete after the invention of sleeper cars, which meant passengers no longer had to disembark for their overnight lodging.⁴² Regardless, Garrett made sure the B&O’s upscale hotels pampered weary travelers in luxury and style. Keyser observed that Garrett insisted on only the best and most costly building materials for his projects. In 1872, after completing the Connellsville connection to Pittsburgh, the B&O started construction on the Queen City Hotel in Cumberland, Maryland. Despite the fountain, gardens, 174 stylish rooms, and “iron work considered to be the finest of any public building outside of New Orleans,” the elegant hotel was seldom used.⁴³ It finally closed in 1938, after twelve years of slow decay, and was demolished in 1950.⁴⁴

Garrett forged ahead with more-modest hotels along the Chicago line: at both Newark and Chicago Junction in Ohio, and his namesake town, Garrett, Indiana. Baldwin created some of the B&O’s best work for the Viaduct Hotel in Relay,

Maryland, to complement the nearby Thomas Viaduct on the old main line. The blue granite hotel was magnificent, situated on a high, rocky cliff overlooking the panoramic countryside, a setting that might have pleased guests but proved to be almost impossible for the building's engineers to complete. It gained fame, particularly for its marble obelisk—still standing—as a “stately monument honoring the builders of the Thomas Viaduct.”⁴⁵ Unfortunately, not many people saw the Garrett-Baldwin showpiece. Relay already had lost its importance as a transfer point, and within ten years of the hotel's completion, aside from occasional day-trippers interested in enjoying lunch and a stroll through the lush gardens, the hotel was seldom used. By the mid-twentieth century, it fell into disrepair.

Garrett's empire included a web of railroads stretching westward to Cincinnati and Chicago, with through services to New York; trans-Atlantic shipping via the North German Lloyd line; tourism; the telegraph division; and vast company real estate holdings. And for all this, the B&O needed a grand corporate headquarters to match its international scope. The old offices at Camden Station, which William Keyser had described as “dreary and barnlike,” were too crude and unsophisticated to handle the bureaucracy of a worldwide corporation. With the Western Maryland resorts and a string of station hotels in progress, Garrett concurrently commissioned Baldwin to design a new headquarters for the B&O at the corner of Baltimore and Calvert Streets, the site of the old Rembrandt Peale's Baltimore Museum that Garrett and his brother often visited as young boys. In 1882, the five-story granite and brick building, “with fanciful coloring of the roof work,” was completed.⁴⁶ Never one to be outdone, Garrett made sure his headquarters ranked as the biggest and the best, with “hydraulic elevators and high ceilinged offices.”⁴⁷ Until the Great Fire of 1904 destroyed it, along with most of downtown Baltimore, the B&O Central Building, as it came to be called, stood as the city's tallest building. “The effect of the building is massive,” the *American Architect and Building News* pronounced, and “the execution of the work of the exterior is apparently faultless.”⁴⁸

Garrett spent little time in his spacious new offices. By then, ailing both physically and mentally, he preferred to work at home, either in his Mount Vernon Place mansion or at Montebello, with Rachel nearby. She served as his comforter, sounding board, and gatekeeper, screening guests and business associates whose news might upset her husband. Garrett's secretaries and telegraphers stayed close at hand. He read every dispatch sent over B&O telegraph lines and wrote nearly as many. He purchased “two or three one-horse carriages and these performed a constant ferry service between headquarters and his home.”⁴⁹

The Garrett-Baldwin collaboration reached its zenith—literally and figuratively—with the new passenger-car shops at the Mount Clare facility, built to replace the historic buildings that burned on January 3, 1883. Within six months, Baldwin set

out to create his B&O masterpiece, the “Roundhouse,” as it is often called. When it was completed in February 1884, the twenty-two-sided brick car shop measured 123 feet high at its crowning cupola. It soon gained fame as the world’s largest circular building. The cost was \$100,472.⁵⁰ Many observers at the time speculated that Baldwin, a devout Catholic who had designed many religious buildings, never had the chance to create his ultimate dream, a cathedral. The magnificent Roundhouse, with its wide-open spaces—235 feet in diameter—and pinnaced ceiling, opening to the heavens, served, perhaps, as Baldwin’s greatest ecclesiastical creation and was often called “Ephraim’s Cathedral.” In 1884, the *Railroad Gazette* gushed, “The great height and size of this remarkably handsome structure are enhanced by the tasteful manner and light color in which the interior is painted.”⁵¹

Preserving the B&O’s Place in History

Such accolades praising the B&O’s buildings spurred Garrett to turn his attention to solidifying the B&O’s premier place in railroad history. In 1880, he initiated something seldom seen in American industry at the time: a public relations project. Garrett knew the importance of public image, having carefully burnished his own since the end of the Civil War. Under Garrett’s stewardship, the B&O became the first railroad company to conserve, promote, and capitalize on its unique place in railroad history.

One event in particular solidified Garrett’s commitment to promoting the B&O’s heritage as “America’s first railroad.” The nation’s 1876 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia roused Americans’ patriotism and pride in the nation’s short but illustrious history. The B&O stole the Centennial’s spotlight, exhibiting not only its newest and most powerful locomotive, the B&O No. 600, designed by J. C. Davis, master of machinery, and built at the Mount Clare shops in 1875, but also the B&O’s oldest locomotive in existence, the “Thomas Jefferson,” a grasshopper locomotive with a covered cab, built in 1836.⁵² Garrett’s public relations plan proved to be a brilliant, well-thought-out strategy to boost business. By the 1880s, competition, particularly in the Northeast, had become fierce, and the B&O generally provided slower and less convenient passenger service than other lines. Rather than resorting to the usual rate wars, Garrett tried a new tack: advertising the B&O as America’s most historic railroad, traveling through America’s most picturesque countryside. Garrett built on the interest in and success of William Prescott Smith’s 1853 *History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, which celebrated the B&O’s victory in reaching Wheeling, and the fanciful 1859 *Harper’s New Monthly Magazine’s* article chronicling the artists’ scenic journey from Baltimore to Wheeling on the B&O.

Once again, as he did in engaging Baldwin, Garrett hired an expert to carry out his scheme, this time a seasoned and highly flamboyant showman to market and create an advertising program and public image for the company: “Major” Joseph Gladding Pangborn, who was not really a major at all. In fact, his professional credentials were highly suspect.⁵³ He claimed to have been a drummer boy in the Civil War, witnessing his father’s death during combat, and a *New York Times* reporter. In reality, his background for the B&O job proved to be far more suitable: tireless promoter, gifted wordsmith with a flair for hyperbole, world traveler—he was known to favor riding in sedan chairs—and, most importantly, an expert land marketer for railroads, with a passion for preserving the B&O’s singular history.⁵⁴ Pangborn and Garrett soon developed a solid friendship and working relationship.⁵⁵

Shortly after joining the company, Pangborn started collecting data about early railroads, “looking up on both sides of the Atlantic the facts bearing upon the railroad,” according to the *New York Times*.⁵⁶ He concluded in no uncertain terms that the B&O ranked as the nation’s first major railroad, a concept he honed in public relations and market strategies for two decades: “Not until the meeting at George Brown’s house on Feb. 12, 1827, had there been a contemplation of a railroad save as a means of increasing the output of mines or quarries.” The *Railroad Gazette* anointed Pangborn the “railroad historian of America.”⁵⁷ He traveled the world, collecting examples of various modes of transportation from several countries: a Russian sleigh, a Japanese jinrikisha, and a “Hindu cart.”⁵⁸ He promoted the B&O wherever he went and regaled audiences with tales of his adventures. He looked far and wide for railroad books, restored abandoned B&O locomotives once thought lost to time, and started what today is the B&O Railroad Museum’s renowned collection.

Pangborn had a lot of good material to work with, and he set about making sure the world knew of the B&O’s place in history as the railroad of many “firsts”—the nation’s first commercial railroad and common carrier; a pioneer in war technology and service to the Union during the Civil War; the operator of the first American-built steam locomotive; and the first railroad to carry US mail. A newspaper reporter once commented that “Pangborn is the best copy I ever knew for a good story on any railroad subject at any time.”⁵⁹ Pangborn never met a superlative he did not like in describing the B&O: “unequaled facilities,” “magnificent equipment,” “superb road bed,” “scenic charms,” “polite and obliging officials,” and “superior dining services” were just some of embellishments that dotted his writings. He wrote articles about the romantic side of railroad travel, never hinting at the gritty reality.

In 1882, Pangborn penned *Picturesque B. and O.*, which memorialized—and mythologized—America’s first railroad. In his hybrid travelogue and history book, Pangborn chronicled the journey of four fictitious travelers as they made their way

westward on the B&O. “On no other line out of New York City can passengers destined for Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Columbus, and Chicago leave together in the same train,” Pangborn boasted.⁶⁰ For those hoping to vacation at the B&O resorts in Garrett County, Pangborn assured would-be travelers that the journey would take twenty-four hours from Chicago or St. Louis; for those coming from Cincinnati, they “could leave in the evening and awake the next morning for breakfast high atop the Alleghenies.”⁶¹ The trip from Baltimore or Washington, DC, to Oakland, Maryland, took a mere eight or nine hours, with three express trains leaving from each city every day. “The enterprise and liberality of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company has made the Glades region [of Western Maryland] inhabitable,” Pangborn pronounced.

Pangborn scored one of his greatest—and most covert—promotions of the B&O in his 1880 *New B&O Red Book*, a compilation of raw political statistical data showing voting results from congressional districts in the 1878 and 1880 national elections. Pangborn professed to publish the book as a public service to the nation and political leaders, “to preserve political information.”⁶² While a seemingly odd choice for a railroad’s corporate promotion, and despite its nondescript title, Pangborn’s tactic proved to be brilliant. On each page of dry election results, Pangborn interjected, almost subliminally, his inimitable prose advertising the B&O. Livening up the pages on the voting records for Indiana, for example, Pangborn reminded readers that “what the Mardi Gras of New Orleans has become to the people South of the Mississippi, the Oriole [fall festival] is to Baltimore, a three-day festival displaying lights of dazzling brilliance and pageants.” In the middle of monotonous columns of voting results for Michigan, Pangborn did not miss the chance to describe the B&O’s Camden Station, “a majestic building, the pride of Baltimore.” For those readers tired of trudging through the voting tally for New York State, Pangborn promoted the not-to-be missed journey from Washington, DC, to George Washington’s estate, Mount Vernon. “This can be accomplished by taking the morning train [from Baltimore] and resuming travel in the evening.” “The steamer,” Pangborn assured prospective passengers, “which by the way is one of the most elegant fitted up on the Potomac, leaves every morning at ten o’clock.” Pangborn gained fame as “the most celebrated public relations professional in the United States, and perhaps the very first to declare that profession as a profession.”⁶³ Garrett made sure copies of Pangborn’s books landed on the desks of railroad colleagues and politicians.⁶⁴

Final Battles

1880–1884

GARRETT'S UNEVEN and often baffling decision making and behavior in the early 1880s—his expensive push to New York, counterbalanced with his brilliant business moves in hiring Baldwin and Pangborn—was not confined to the B&O. It also became publicly noticeable in his role as a trustee of Johns Hopkins's bequest. The two men's longtime personal friendship and eighteen-year working relationship at the B&O had seen its ups and downs, but after Hopkins's death in 1873, Garrett—thinking he had known Hopkins better than anyone—took on a self-appointed role as Hopkins's posthumous voice.

Hopkins left an estate of \$8 million; he bequeathed \$1 million to family and charities in Baltimore, with the remaining \$7 million to be divided equally between a university and a hospital in his name. It represented the largest philanthropic gift ever given in the United States. Commodore Vanderbilt had bequeathed \$1 million to found a university in his name in Nashville in 1873, and steel magnate Andrew Carnegie established medical institutions and libraries across the country. But none matched Hopkins's astounding figure of \$7 million. Following the advice George Peabody had given him at Garrett's home during their 1867 meeting, Hopkins gave his trustees wide latitude in creating his institutions, "a certain testament, happily free from all definite ideas," philosopher Charles S. Peirce noted at the time.¹ One of the few caveats Hopkins did make in his will instructed that the trustees should never sell the 15,000 shares of B&O stock that funded his bequest: "to not dispose of said capital stock, or of the stock accruing thereon by way of increment, or dividend stock . . . as an investment."² Only cash dividends could be used for construction and operational costs. Garrett had advised Hopkins on this course of action to keep the B&O within Garrett's control. Hopkins, like Garrett, had always believed in the invincibility of B&O stocks.

The trustees set about their job of creating an entirely different kind of university: not a public university, such as the land grant colleges—"Democracy's colleges," as

Lincoln called these institutions when he signed the Morrill Act, creating them in 1862—nor a private men’s liberal arts college, like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton; nor a church-affiliated college. Rather, the trustees wanted to establish a secular, research-based university, modeled on the great institutions of Europe. The trustees delved into the latest literature in the emerging field of higher education in the United States and sought the advice of leading educational leaders. The hospital—a separate legal entity from the university—would also honor the progressive, far-reaching standards of its benefactor. The great age of science in the late nineteenth century called for a medical institution that reflected the many advances being made in those disciplines and in medicine, particularly developments that had evolved from the battlefield medicine of the Civil War. To that end, the trustees hoped to create a hospital and a medical school that could merge health-related discoveries made in the laboratory with clinical patient care, what would soon be called “bench to bedside,” the hallmark of modern medicine.

No matter how thoroughly the trustees discussed and researched the scope and mission of the new Hopkins institutions, as with most collaborative projects that Garrett joined, the autocratic railroad president was not about to take a back seat or let his opinions go unnoticed. Garrett first opposed his fellow trustees over the mission of the university. Most trustees thought big, wanting the institution to set high scholarly standards and be national—even international—in scope, drawing students and faculty from a wide range of backgrounds and academic disciplines. Garrett disagreed. Always thinking of Baltimore’s economic development, Garrett wanted the university to be local and vocational in nature, to train workers and help broaden the city’s industrial opportunities. He insisted that Hopkins shared this vision, but Garrett’s fellow trustees voted him down.

The issue of admitting women also concerned the trustees. State universities around the country had opened their doors to women, but most of the Hopkins trustees, Garrett included, opposed the idea. Johns Hopkins, as an egalitarian Quaker, might not have agreed with them. Renowned educator Charles Eliot, president of Harvard College and an outspoken adversary of coeducation, was among those serving on the Hopkins advisory board. In a commencement speech, Eliot warned of the perils of co-mingling. Women, he admonished, should attend women’s colleges that offer a curriculum “that does not injure women’s bodily powers and functions,” adding that “it would be a wonder, indeed, if the intellectual capacities of women were not at least as unlike those of men as their bodily capacities are.”³ The Hopkins trustees took his advice. Women would not be admitted to Johns Hopkins University.

Although many effects of the Panic of 1873 still lingered, the male-only institution opened on October 3, 1876, in downtown Baltimore—on Howard Street, just

north of Centre Street. Its humble buildings belied its groundbreaking nature as the nation's first graduate-level, research-based university. It promised to revolutionize higher education in the United States, but within three years, the school fell into dire financial straits. The B&O's monetary problems, brought on by the national depression and internal fiscal weaknesses, directly affected the fledgling university, with its \$7 million bequest comprised primarily of B&O stock. In 1878, following the Great Railroad Strike of 1877 and Garrett's two previous 10 percent dividend increases, the B&O started paying its dividends in stock, not cash. This spelled doom for the university. With no cash from this expected source to fill the coffers, in 1878 the trustees voted to sell the stocks received as dividends.

Garrett again was beside himself. Although angry that the trustees had blatantly disregarded Hopkins's directive to never sell the railroad stocks, Garrett had another, more pressing concern. The university's 15,000 shares of B&O stock represented the third-largest collective ownership in the company, after the city of Baltimore and the Garretts. The trustees' sale of the dividend stock might lead to further divestment, severely devaluing the overall price of B&O shares and, much more troubling to Garrett, putting a large block of stock on the open market for outside parties to purchase, thus jeopardizing his and Baltimore's control of the firm. On October 6, 1879, Garrett stormed into the university trustees' board meeting, ready for battle. He accused the trustees of mismanagement, censuring the board's treasurer, Francis White, for being "singularly ignorant" about the B&O. Garrett vowed that the next day the B&O would pay a 4 percent cash dividend, as well as that the university's income from the B&O would double in the next decade.⁴ He held true to the first promise, but the second would prove to be a disastrous prediction.

Garrett was not a man to tangle with. His fellow trustees did not like him, as he could be arrogant, intimidating, and uncompromising. Worse, given the university's dependence on the B&O, he ran the show. He "had a strong and determined will," Keyser wrote of Garrett's professional relationships, "but made a low estimate of the mental incisiveness of others, which led him to impress his own personality and views to an extraordinary degree on those by whom he was surrounded, his will in most instances having the effect of the law."⁵

And there was one other grievance—a very serious one—Garrett had with the trustees: their decision to locate the institution in downtown Baltimore. Garrett insisted that Hopkins had wanted his university to be situated at Clifton, the latter's country estate. Many in Baltimore shared Garrett's resentment over the board defying the benefactor's vision. Hopkins had bequeathed his elegant 330-acre country estate to the university and reportedly had once said that Clifton "is to be the site of a great university, a place where the young men of coming generations will have the opportunity which I have always longed for."⁶ The university's first annual report

conceded their awareness of Hopkins's wish to open his university at Clifton: "The Trustees have not forgotten the importance of developing the Clifton site with reference to the purposes to which it would be devoted."⁷ Newspaper obituaries reaffirmed Hopkins's wish: "He stated he wanted a university at Clifton, with law, medical, classical, and agricultural schools."⁸

Nonetheless, however much Garrett disagreed with the decision to open the university in downtown Baltimore, the trustees' choice made sense. Clifton's location was remote and inconvenient, far removed from transit lines, boardinghouses, the Peabody Library, and other cultural institutions that would benefit students and faculty. In 1879, Garrett, still hopeful, hired a botanist to improve the grounds of Clifton for the university, yet it remained unused, except to provide athletic fields. Hopkins's once magnificent estate, "Baltimore's showcase," soon fell into disrepair.

Garrett had other motives for backing the Clifton location. It was no coincidence that Hopkins had persuaded him to purchase Montebello years earlier; it was adjacent to Clifton and the two combined estates amounted to nearly two thousand acres. Although Garrett often escaped to Montebello to enjoy his racehorses and to entertain, he had more in mind than relaxation. The land was prime for development—and he had every intention of being the one to do so. "Squares of beautiful houses would in time be erected," he explained, "with parks and ornamental grounds adding to the healthfulness and charms of the surroundings."⁹ But the locale lacked one essential ingredient to turn his grand plan into reality—Hopkins's new university. Without it, Montebello would remain what it was: another wealthy tycoon's country getaway.

By 1882, the university had outgrown its downtown location and needed to expand its science laboratories. Garrett renewed his campaign for a Clifton location with a vengeance. "Thus began a fight which is memorable in the annals of [Baltimore]," the *New York Times* reported, as the trustees prepared to make their decision in 1883. "Mr. Garrett fought with the earnestness and vigor of his nature." The issue was so controversial that for the first time, the board requested that their votes be tallied in the minutes. Again, Garrett lost the fight. Furious, he—along with two other trustees, including Hopkins's cousin Lewis—immediately resigned from the board. "Garrett never flagged," the *Times* later recounted, and "he continued to reproach privately and publicly the action which he declared treason to the wishes of his friend."¹⁰

One of those public reproaches came in January 1883, when Garrett's mental instability and declining health became shockingly apparent. A year earlier, he had received a letter from Francis B. Mayer, in which the Baltimore businessman resurrected Hopkins's long-abandoned plan to locate the university at Clifton. Mayer hoped to extend a grand boulevard out from the estate, connecting it to the important

hubs of Baltimore: the downtown business region, the B&O headquarters, and the Peabody Institute, among others. The proposed avenue, “three-hundred feet wide with six rows of trees could be made to rival the Champs Elysees of Paris,” Mayer insisted.¹¹ Clifton—and, by association, Montebello—would become a new social, educational, and commercial hub of Baltimore.

Mayer’s tantalizing but probably unrealistic idea simmered in Garrett’s mind—and eventually exploded in a most unfortunate venue. On January 30, Garrett presided over a gala event celebrating Baltimore’s YMCA, an organization he had supported for thirty years and whose new building he and Johns Hopkins had financed. Politicians, business leaders, and Hopkins trustees filled the banquet hall, the *Baltimore Sun* reported. After obligatory and genial introductions, Garrett stepped up to the podium. He proudly enumerated the YMCA’s many accomplishments over the decades, explaining how he had convinced Hopkins to contribute \$10,000, along with Garrett’s own equal amount, to erect the new YMCA building. He recalled how, years earlier, he had brought George Peabody and Johns Hopkins, “these two remarkable men,” together in his house to discuss “the disposition of [Hopkins’s] estate.”¹²

Suddenly and without warning, Garrett let loose a firestorm of vitriol aimed at the Hopkins trustees, many of whom sat on the dais in back of him. The volcanic eruption shook the room. Garrett accused the trustees of mishandling Hopkins’s wishes for his university and hospital. Hopkins, he assured the audience, had not wanted his university to be located in a “noisy, thickly populated section of the city,” but rather at his country home. Instead of investing the requisite money as Hopkins had wished, the trustees instead had spent “an enormous sum in the City of Baltimore and not at Clifton Park.”

And there were other egregious violations of Hopkins’s bequest, Garrett roared. Nine years after Hopkins’s death, the hospital already had run up costs of \$1,200,000 and still was far from finished. “Not one patient, not one of the indigent sick of Baltimore has received any benefit from this vast expenditure,” he admonished. Hopkins’s great dream, Garrett continued, was for the creation of a medical school unequalled in the United States, to rival the famous medical institutions of Europe. “Where are the medical classes that should now be engaged in preparing physicians with the highest culture and best advantages to be derived from clinical instruction at the hospital, as designed by the founder?” he stormed. Garrett concluded by insisting the trustees “at once establish a medical school and other additional schools and arrange for the commencement of the beneficent work of the hospital within a single year.”

Garrett’s angry outburst shocked the audience. By 1883, many Baltimoreans and other interested parties knew of the university’s dependence on the B&O and the company’s failure to provide the needed cash dividends to finish the massive

thirteen-building hospital complex and fulfill Hopkins's dream of creating a prestigious medical school. Garrett's public hostility toward the trustees might have been his way of absolving himself of the direct link between his role as B&O president and the company's failure to ensure the university's solvency.

The *Baltimore Sun's* headlines the next day were not kind, finding that many in the audience, particularly the trustees, looked shell shocked. "An Unexpected Feature of the Y.M.C.A. Celebration," heralded the newspaper, and "Mr. Garrett Speaks Out." "During the delivery of the speech these gentlemen [the trustees] were the center of observation," the *Sun* stated.¹³ The most powerful man in Maryland had not only publicly humiliated the city of Baltimore and university leaders with an unnecessary and ill-timed outburst, but, most damaging of all, he had revealed his precarious mental health and confirmed the suspicions, held by many, of his decreasing competence to run the city's commercial lifeline.

Soon after the public debacle, Garrett and Rachel traveled to Cincinnati and then Jacksonville, Florida, on business. It was too much for him. Garrett's doctor again ordered all cessation from work and public activities. Two months later, Garrett, Rachel, and Mary once more sailed to Europe, where they stayed for six months, hoping to find the elusive cure for Garrett's declining health. The trip did him little good. "While he was there," the *Baltimore Sun* reported, "he was several times unwell."¹⁴

On October 11, 1883, police and spectators swarmed the street outside Baltimore's City Hall, where a public brawl between two Democratic operatives turned deadly, with one of the men shooting his opponent to death.¹⁵ On that morning, several miles north of the chaotic scene downtown, in the quiet, bucolic countryside near Montebello, another, far more private tragedy unfolded for the Garretts. Rachel set out in her carriage for her morning ride. She and her husband and daughter had recently returned from Europe and sought solace in the tranquility of their country estate to continue Garrett's recuperation.

Suddenly the carriage's horses spooked, and Rachel was thrown violently to the ground, striking her head. The driver rushed her back to Montebello, where the family summoned their physician, Dr. Alan P. Smith. He told the bereft family that there was little hope for recovery. For five weeks, Rachel lay unconscious. The Baltimore newspapers posted regular bulletins about her condition. Her family received hundreds of cables and cards, many from strangers, wishing her well. Garrett moved his office—his secretaries and telegraphers—to the estate, where he and Mary kept a bedside vigil. On November 15, at eight o'clock in the morning, the formerly vibrant and lively 60-year-old matriarch died, surrounded by her family. Her funeral was held at her son Robert's Mount Vernon Place mansion on November 17, with burial at Green Mount Cemetery, not far from Montebello.¹⁶

Garrett was inconsolable. Rachel had held the family together through their many trials and had been her husband's steadfast companion through his illnesses, his helpmeet for thirty-seven years. She enjoyed a close relationship with her daughters-in-law, who wrote often and warmly, always formally referring to her as "Mrs. Garrett." Her sister had envied Rachel's globe-trotting life, quipping, "You are always flitting about."¹⁷ The newspapers recounted Rachel's fine qualities as her husband's "right hand"; his "companion in all his hours, those given to business as well as to home life"; the buffer between her ailing husband and the heavy responsibilities he bore.¹⁸ At Rachel's funeral, the Reverend John Leyburn, as the officiant, recalled the couple's fidelity and steadfastness.¹⁹ "I have never seen in all my life an instance where man and wife were more completely a unit," Leyburn fondly remembered. He averred that they remained devoted to each other, with never "a hint of scandal" in their marriage.²⁰ Hundreds of letters of condolence poured in, ranging from Baltimore citizens well acquainted with Rachel's civic activities to Garrett's professional friends and foes.²¹

The death of his beloved Rachel struck the final blow for Garrett. A month after her death, he presided over what would be his final board meeting in the new B&O headquarters building. Once again, the board unanimously reelected him as president. "I cannot fail to appreciate the honor of being thus called upon to again serve you," Garrett stated.²² As he had done twenty-five years earlier at his first election, he reaffirmed his loyalty to Baltimore and to the B&O. He summarized the growth of the company over the years of his presidency: "When I became your executive in 1858 the length of the roads under your control was 141 miles and their cost thirty-two millions. Now the properties owned and controlled by the Baltimore and Ohio Company aggregate 1,990 miles and their cost more than one hundred and thirty-four millions of dollars." He finished his speech and then, according to witnesses, broke down and sobbed and was escorted from the room.

Robert II had been appointed B&O president pro tem during Garrett's most recent trip to Europe, a move that more than likely reaffirmed to Garrett and everyone associated with the B&O his son's unsuitability for the job, particularly after Robert's lackluster turn as president of the Valley Railroad. "Although for the past nine months he has seldom been seen at his office in the company's main building," the *New York Times* wrote in August of John Garrett's absence from the public sphere, "he nevertheless has given careful supervision to the main details of policy and management though Mr. Robert Garrett is doing the active work."²³ With Rachel's death coming so quickly after the family's return from Europe in 1883, and Garrett's continued decline, little could be done to change the succession. Garrett had encouraged Keyser to take the presidency, an offer Keyser refused if John's son Robert were to remain as a vice president.²⁴ Garrett continued to counsel his son

about the treacherous railroad business. In January 1884, as an important B&O decision approached, he warned Robert: “Do nothing to be published. Beware of your Chicago friends—some of them are great tricksters.”²⁵

Mary tried valiantly to console her father, but her ministering did little good. They began a nomadic life, moving aimlessly from Montebello to Deer Park to health clinics up and down the East Coast, and then returning to Montebello to start all over again. Dr. Mary Putnam Jacobi, a longtime friend of Mary’s and one of the country’s most renowned physicians, traveled with the family as a companion for Mary. The family physician, Dr. Alan Smith, accompanied them. During the winter of 1883–1884, the entourage spent long weeks at Lakewood, a glamorous health spa in New Jersey for the well heeled; the *New York Times* devoted a weekly column, “The Season at Lakewood,” to its societal comings and goings. Jay Gould and the Rockefellers had country homes nearby, although it is not known if Garrett visited them. The months of caring for her father began to take a toll on Mary, who wrote to her friend Carey Thomas in March, “Papa and I have settled in and I’m afraid I’m going to find it dreary.”²⁶ The infinite details of running the Garrett estates fell to Mary. “So many things have to be thought of,” she lamented, “and it takes a good deal of time to give orders on paper.”

Nothing could soothe the once-powerful czar of Maryland—neither his fortune, nor his stays at fashionable resorts, nor his grand estates, nor his esteemed thoroughbreds. A year earlier, he had commissioned the addition of a two-story art gallery on the back of the Mount Vernon Place mansion, the home his father had so proudly built twenty-seven years earlier. It was needed. John had recently ordered seventeen full-sized statues from a sculptor in Rome—in addition to the many he already owned. Along with his extensive paintings, his prized art collection had outgrown the space available on his many estates. Garrett also had another, more altruistic goal for this new construction. Since Baltimore did not yet have an art museum, he hoped to open the gallery to the public. “A casual passer-by would have only the faintest idea of the magnitude and the importance of the improvements being made” to the mansion, the *Baltimore Sun* reported. “They consist mainly in the construction of a picture gallery and conservatory of rare beauty and of the richest and most elaborate adornments.”²⁷

Garrett no longer socialized with colleagues. Philadelphia financier Joseph Drexel, chairman of the American Committee of the Statue of Liberty, invited Garrett to a special reception commemorating the laying of the pedestal for the great monument, but he declined. Most shocking to all who knew him, Garrett lost interest in his beloved B&O. Baldwin’s great Roundhouse, which was nearing completion, was of no importance to him, nor was the newly constructed B&O Central Building. The ongoing mergers, expansions, and rate wars of his formidable rivals

continued with their usual ferocity, but Garrett retreated from the battles. He “separated himself almost entirely from the active cares of the business to which for many previous years he had so closely and indefatigably devoted himself,” the *Baltimore American* later explained.²⁸

One event in early June momentarily lifted his spirits. A group of newspapermen who had just covered the 1884 Republican National Convention in Chicago wanted to see how fast a train could get from there to Washington, DC. The B&O stepped up to the challenge. The company’s “Newspaper Express” traveled the 812 miles in record time, twenty-two hours and thirty minutes, and won the race.²⁹ When he heard the news while at Montebello, Garrett “expressed satisfaction.” Normally, the once-demonstrative railroad president would have been euphoric, but he was fading.³⁰ It was said that Garrett had two loves: his wife and the B&O.³¹ Now Rachel was gone, and the joys and triumphs of the B&O slowly drifted away.

By early September 1884, Garrett’s health declined to such a point that friends expressed shock at the sudden change in his appearance. His behavior became erratic. “He had acquired the habit of constantly bathing his head in strong cologne,” Keyser noted, “using it at all times freely, and at others, placing his head under the spigot and allowing the cold water to run upon it.”³² Garrett became noticeably thinner and appeared frail. The once confident, competent, robust businessman—who, as an adolescent, had ventured by horseback to the frontier to expand his father’s business, for the next twenty years had built the family firm into a respected international company, and for the following twenty-six years had led a railroad through a war and some of the most punishing corporate competition of the period—was, at age 64, a shell of his former self. “His energy and ambition had been sapped by years of intense labor and worse, physical and mental disabilities,” the *Baltimore Sun* noted.³³ Garrett briefly revived when Andrew Carnegie sent him a copy of his just-published autobiography. “I have thought of you lying in that bed,” Carnegie wrote. “Maybe because you know the author you might get a smile out of my book.”³⁴

In late summer, Mary accompanied her father to the family’s cottage at Deer Park, where she hoped that the mountain climate and the sight of his successful hotel projects would buoy his spirits. He rallied for a while. “The trouble with his kidneys had apparently been cured,” the *Baltimore Sun* noted, “but he had a relapse brought on, it is thought, by taking on some of the business connected with the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.”³⁵ More than likely, that business involved the B&O’s telegraph line. With Gould and his Western Union Telegraph Company always ready for a corporate coup, Garrett assumed direct oversight of the B&O’s telegraph division. Fully aware of Gould’s stealth, Garrett kept a close watch on and overly cautious control of this division.³⁶ To preempt Gould, Garrett merged twenty-six telegraph companies into a B&O subsidiary with no common stock of their own,

thus averting a Gould takeover.³⁷ He notified the division's superintendent of telegraph that the "central control and ownership of all of our telegraph lines of the B&O Company . . . will be transferred directly to [the B&O auditor's and treasurer's] Departments and treated on the same principles and systems adopted with all other interests of the Company."³⁸

To create his telegraph subsidiary, Garrett had formed an alliance among bankers, merchants, and postal companies "to extend his wires to every important city east of the Rocky Mountains" and compete with Jay Gould's Western Union Company.³⁹ In the 1882 *Annual Report*, Garrett had stated that he was "determined to maintain the absolute independence of its [the B&O's] telegraph system."⁴⁰ By that year, the report noted, the B&O had invested more than \$2 million into the project, which consisted of 6,886 miles of poles and 47,417 miles of wires; it was one of the largest telegraph systems in the country. "It was long a cherished scheme of Mr. Garrett's, who looked forward to a great telegraphic system with the Baltimore and Ohio as its nucleus," the *New York Times* explained.⁴¹ For those who could not remember the historical significance, the newspaper offered a reminder to its readers: "This organization is the oldest of its kind in the world and Prof. Morse sent his first telegraphic message over the wires strung along the line now traversed by it [the B&O]. It was formed and originally operated as an adjunct to the railroad." When not looking over his shoulder for some adverse action by Gould, Garrett worried about more mundane matters, such as the "rotten telegraph poles" in Baltimore, ordering the superintendent to replace them.⁴²

But throwing his energy into maintaining control of the telegraph system and fighting off a possible Gould takeover drained Garrett of his remaining strength. His condition worsened. One of the many friends who visited him in this final period was John Leyburn, whom Garrett had recruited as the new pastor of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1866. Sitting at Garrett's bedside, Leyburn asked, "My friend, in all your troubles, trials, and afflictions, are you trusting fully and heartily in your blessed Savior?" Garrett responded, "I am," and burst into tears.⁴³

Within days, Garrett lost consciousness, and the family rushed to his bedside. He lay "in a pleasant room on the second floor facing north," an observer noted.⁴⁴ Another family physician, Dr. Nathan Gortor, attended to Garrett. Newspaper reporters camped outside the cottage, keeping a deathbed vigil and eager for the latest update. "The President is about the same today," Mary wrote to the throng of reporters, signing her messages "Miss Garrett."⁴⁵ The papers reported that he "was dying in inches."⁴⁶

The Allegheny Mountains of Western Maryland that Garrett knew so well surrounded him during his last illness. "The woods still keep their fall fashion and are most beautiful," Mary commented.⁴⁷ The old National Road, which Garrett had

traversed many times as a young man working for his father, lay a few miles away. Farther north in Pennsylvania, B&O trains rolled on the Pittsburgh line that Garrett had fought to open in the previous decade; the old Garrett farm still remained nearby, in West Middletown, Pennsylvania. All around Garrett County were reminders of the ferocious battles of the Civil War, when John Garrett and the B&O had supported Lincoln's efforts to preserve the Union. Chief among them were Gettysburg, Antietam, and the new state of West Virginia, split off from Virginia in the midst of the war. In nearby Virginia, statues lionized Garrett's wartime adversaries: Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. From the cottage where Garrett lay, the sound of B&O trains passing through the mountains could be heard in the distance. Garrett had spent the past quarter of a century bringing prosperity to Baltimore by making sure those tracks extended to the flourishing markets of the expanding nation.

A hush settled over the Garrett cottage at Deer Park as Mary quietly tended to her father and family members arrived. Garrett "passed peacefully away" at 5:25 a.m. on Friday, September 26, 1884, at age 64. His death certificate listed renal failure as the cause of death, but all who knew him understood that he died of a broken heart after Rachel's tragic death ten months earlier. "When she died," the *New York Tribune* explained, "his heart broke."⁴⁸

Within hours of Garrett's death, the B&O board convened a special meeting. William Findley Burns, Garrett's lifelong friend from their college days and a B&O director, read the memorial: "When John W. Garrett joined the board in 1855, he brought to it a performance of duties and knowledge that he had acquired as a member of the firm of Robert Garrett and Sons, whose large Western business made it familiar with the wants and the capabilities of the vast country which, at a later date, was to find the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad one of the most important avenues to the Atlantic seaboard."⁴⁹

The family organized a funeral train, draped in black and bearing a front metal plate marked "At Rest," to carry his body from Deer Park to Camden Station in Baltimore.⁵⁰ Crowds gathered along the track as the train passed through one small town to another. The remains were taken by carriage to Montebello for the funeral. One friend in particular wrote of the devastation Mary must have been enduring. Writing to Robert II, he stated, "When you see your sister, pray extend to her my sincere sympathy and my kind regards—she must feel the shock most of all, having been so closely bound up of late with both father and mother, as daughter, as friend, adviser, companion, and nurse."⁵¹

Although the *Baltimore Sun* noted that the family had hoped for a "quiet and unostentatious" farewell, Garrett's funeral turned out to be the largest yet held in Maryland.⁵² On September 28, 800 family members, friends, and colleagues attended services at Montebello. Garrett's rose-colored coffin lay in the parlor, facing

the lake where he had enjoyed sailing with his guests over the years. “The room was filled with superb floral designs in a great variety and at the foot of the coffin stood a large floral driving wheel of an engine with one felloe [part of the rim into which spokes are inserted] gone and the crank pin broken, a tribute of respect from the officers of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.”⁵³ The Reverend Leyburn, who had delivered Rachel’s and Henry’s eulogies, conducted the service. As the guests filed out of the house, they saw thousands of mourners spread across Montebello’s front lawn.

The funeral cortege made its way to Green Mount Cemetery, where “many thousands more” lined the streets. Politicians from near and far joined the procession, as did many of Garrett’s longtime adversaries from the Pennsylvania, the Erie, and the New York Central Railroads, among others. As the cortege pulled through the front gates of the cemetery, “a thousand B&O employees stood on either side.” Downtown, at the black-draped B&O Central Building, a huge crowd gathered; many other edifices in the heart of the city similarly displayed funeral bunting. At the cemetery, mourners gathered on a quiet knoll near the Gothic chapel, where, under a simple headstone, Garrett was laid to rest next to Rachel. A few feet away lay the gravesite of Johns Hopkins.

After Garrett

1884–1915

WITHIN DAYS OF JOHN GARRETT's death, Baltimoreans began speculating about the value of his estate, with estimates ranging from \$5 million to as high as \$30 million. The actual amount totaled \$16,815,592.97, in addition to thirty-three commercial and residential rental properties, which brought in \$79,000 annually.¹ In his will, Garrett equitably divided the bulk of his cash and stocks among Robert II, Harry, and Mary, with lifetime provisions made for the care of his invalid son Henry, who was to live with Mary. He appointed Mary as a co-executor with Robert and Harry. At a time when few women controlled money or property, much less were appointed to settle a massive, complex estate, Mary's father had put his daughter on the same footing as her brothers. "He thought to give me, a woman, equal value in the management of his estate, with the full knowledge that I would use that power," she later wrote.² He also bequeathed his personal real estate properties to his daughter: 101 West Monument Street on Mount Vernon Place, the 1,400-acre Montebello estate, the Deer Park cottage, and numerous lucrative rental properties in Baltimore. He transferred ownership of Robert II's Mount Vernon Place mansion and Harry's Evergreen home from RG&S to his sons.

Baltimoreans cared more about the Garretts' near-monopoly on B&O stocks than for Garrett's bequests to his family. Baltimore's commercial well-being had been intimately connected with the Garretts for two generations, particularly under Garrett's B&O presidency, and many people feared for the city's economic future after his death. As the *Baltimore American* noted, "there is a general desire for information as to the disposition of the estate," adding that "such interrogation, not only is quite natural, but proper and not indelicate, as would be the case under other circumstances."³ It was hardly "indelicate." Should the Garrett heirs sell their stocks, Baltimore could lose control of the railroad that had been an integral part of the city's prosperity for half a century. But Garrett had planned ahead, having seen too often in his career how a city could lose commercial vitality if its railroad failed.

He devised a posthumous plan to keep the B&O within the Garretts' and Baltimore's control. At the time of his death, there were 147,925.66 shares of B&O common stock.⁴ John Garrett's three children owned the largest collective block, consisting of 40,000 shares; the city of Baltimore, 32,500; and the Johns Hopkins Trust, 17,500. This concentration totaled 90,000, or 61 percent—the majority of the shares.⁵ In an unconventional move, in his will Garrett instructed his children not to sell 30,000 of their collective shares for twenty years, adding that he hoped the other two major stockholders—the Johns Hopkins Trust and the city of Baltimore—would act similarly, in order “to control the management of the Road in the interests of the City.”⁶

Garrett's children did not comment publicly on their father's long-term directive, which would stretch into the next century. Garrett's plan would prevent his children from accessing their collective \$6 million, three-fourths of their stock inheritance, until 1904. But they would hardly be impoverished. During the twenty-year holding period, his offspring would benefit from the interest on the stock, an estimated \$200,000 annually for each heir. The city of Baltimore expressed relief over the plan. “John W. Garrett meant that control of the Baltimore and Ohio should be kept within the Garrett family,” the *Baltimore Sun* explained.⁷ Like Johns Hopkins, who had instructed his trustees to not sell the B&O stocks that endowed the university and the hospital, Garrett, too, had felt confident that his twenty-year plan would ensure his family's control over the company well into the future. “He [Garrett] was a firm believer in the intrinsic value of the stock, to-day and permanently,” Lewis Hopkins commented.⁸

It did not take long for Garrett's financial and dynastic plans to unravel. On November 20, 1884, two months after his death, the B&O board unsurprisingly elected Robert II to the presidency. At 38, he was the same age his father had been when John Garrett became president of the company.⁹ Robert now was “the youngest of the railroad magnates and capitalists in the United States,” the *Baltimore Sun* noted.¹⁰ Although surrounded by railroading through much of his life, Robert II was ill prepared for the monumental task ahead. “He had too much given to him and really earned few of the several advances presented to him.”¹¹ Once in office, Robert depended entirely on the advice of Samuel Spencer, the B&O's senior vice president and head of operations, and John Cowen, chief B&O legal counsel and Robert's Princeton classmate.

But neither Spencer nor Cowen could compensate for Robert's inherent lack of initiative, good judgment, and business knowledge, or for his health problems. Like his father, Robert suffered from depression, and taking on the presidency of the B&O exacerbated his already-fragile mental health. Early on in his stint in office, Robert earned a reputation for incompetence, laziness, and disinterest in the corporation he was leading. “Bob Garrett is completely under your thumb. He does whatever you

tell him to do,” a political crony of Cowen’s remarked. “It is well known that he has very little sense, and knows nothing about business, hates work, and cares nothing except to have a good time, and his recklessness and dissipation not only here but elsewhere have become notorious.”¹² Robert could not control state politicians as his father had, particularly those in the dominant Democratic Party, whom he seemed to antagonize.

On December 8, 1885, a year after taking office, Robert met with William H. Vanderbilt, who, like Robert, had been handpicked to succeed his father, the Commodore. Garrett and Vanderbilt met in the latter’s home in New York to settle a contract dispute. Suddenly, Vanderbilt “lurched forward . . . and fell prostrate, senseless and dying, stricken down by apoplexy.”¹³ He fell dead in Robert’s arms at age 64. The traumatic event triggered the beginning of the end of Robert’s short presidency of the B&O, bringing on a deep depression.

Soon after, Robert, his wife Mary Frick, his sister Mary, and Julia Rogers, Mary’s childhood friend, followed a familiar Garrett trend: sailing to Europe for a curative excursion. Like his father’s trips, Robert II found that only work and worry, rather than relaxation, awaited him at every turn. His illness grew worse. In July 1887, Robert again traveled to Europe to secure financing for the B&O. While abroad, he heard rumors that the B&O board had clandestinely consulted with J. Pierpont Morgan—now considered to be the most powerful man in the world—to infuse the B&O with much-needed cash. In negotiating the deal, Morgan insisted on hand-picking his executives, and Robert knew he would not be at the top of the list. Worse news followed: Jay Gould and his Western Union Telegraph Company coveted the prized B&O Telegraph Company. Robert could not compete against two such powerhouses as Morgan and Gould. The obstacles proved to be insurmountable for him, and in the fall of 1887, under doctor’s orders, Robert resigned the presidency, simply stating, “It is well known to many of you that it has been for some time my fixed desire and intention to withdraw from my position as President of the Baltimore and Ohio.”¹⁴

Robert II achieved one great triumph during his tenure—and not an insignificant one. In 1886, he completed the ninety-five-mile rail line from Baltimore to Philadelphia, a segment of the New York Harbor project that John Garrett had first proposed to the board in 1871. Robert’s success in completing his father’s dream of a Baltimore–Philadelphia line did not come cheaply, with estimates ranging from \$15 million to \$20 million.¹⁵ Robert faced cost overruns, as well as the need to raise an additional \$4.5 million through a bond issue, which still did not cover the full amount. At the same time, he found himself pitted against Philadelphia’s powerful, Pennsylvania Railroad–dominated political forces, in the same kinds of battles his father had fought for years. Robert managed to bring the B&O directly into Philadelphia,

primarily because of legal counsel John Cowen's brilliant argument to that city's leaders that they were being "fenced in" by the Pennsylvania Railroad's monopoly.¹⁶ Revenues from this segment were slow to compensate for the costs, but by 1891–1892, earnings finally outweighed expenses and the line became profitable. As his father had done in creating buildings with a characteristic B&O style, Robert, too, hired a famed architect, Philadelphian Frank Furness, to design aesthetically distinctive stations—twenty-six in all over the next decade—that dotted the route from Baltimore to Philadelphia.

The B&O-owned lines stopped at Philadelphia. But New York remained an important goal. Two other major railroads already dominated the New York area, and J. Pierpont Morgan—who held undisputed power over such decisions—did not like redundancy and blocked the construction of a new B&O line. The B&O finally reached New York Harbor, terminating at Jersey City, on the New Jersey side of the Hudson River, and closer to Manhattan than the previous terminus at St. George, on Staten Island. The new arrangement was made possible via traffic agreements with the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad and the Central Railroad of New Jersey.

Robert's resignation meant that for the first time in three decades, a Garrett did not head the B&O. The board remained uncertain as to who would be Robert's successor. Some directors initially approached John King Jr., who had served as B&O's first vice president and John Garrett's competent right-hand man between 1866 and 1881, when poor health—and possibly the prospect of having Robert as his boss—forced him to resign. By 1884, King had recovered enough to take on the presidency of the Erie Railroad, then undergoing one of its periodic financial crises. When approached after Robert's resignation, King declined the B&O presidency, preferring to get the Erie through its troubles. He did so, but his health problems returned and he left the Erie Railroad in 1895; he died in Nice, France, two years later. In the end, the B&O board elected—perhaps reluctantly—vice president Samuel Spencer, already a J. Pierpont Morgan ally.¹⁷

After resigning, Robert II and his family, along with two personal physicians, set off on a two-month cross-country trip to the West Coast. As his train left Baltimore, Robert, disoriented and sick, shouted: "They have stolen my telegraph! Don't let Jay Gould capture Maryland before I get back!"¹⁸ The farther the family traveled from Baltimore and the pressures of the B&O, the more Robert improved. He slowly began showing signs of the emboldened 16-year-old who had defied his father and run away to fight for Robert E. Lee twenty-four years earlier. When the group reached California, they spontaneously decided to sail around the world. On December 29, they boarded the *San Pablo*, bound for Yokohama, Japan. They stopped along the way in Hawaii, where King David Kalakaua entertained the Garrett entourage at his palace. From there, they traveled to China, Hong Kong, and Egypt,

where they sailed up the Nile to Luxor and Giza to see the great pyramids. Robert enthusiastically enjoyed a safari deep into the African jungle, where he shot lions. The travelers then continued on to Constantinople, St. Petersburg, and Berlin.¹⁹ Robert's depression seemed to ebb.

Robert's recovery came to an abrupt end when the group reached Paris in the summer of 1888. The family learned that Harry had drowned in the Chesapeake Bay on June 7. During a day of sailing with friends, Harry's sleek, 120-foot schooner *Gleam* had collided with a steamer, the *Joppa*. The *Gleam* quickly sank. All hands on board the schooner survived—except Harry, who was thrown overboard. For a week, search crews dredged the waters off Sandy Point in the bay, hoping to find the boat and Harry's body. For many Baltimoreans, it was hard to imagine that the handsome, erudite scion of one of the state's most famous families, a husband and the father of three, had met such a tragic fate at the age of 39. Newspapers reported daily on the futile efforts.

Searchers finally recovered the body. Within hours, mourners gathered at Harry's Evergreen mansion for the funeral. Robert II, his wife, and his sister Mary remained in Europe and could not attend; Robert was too ill to travel. Mourners converged on the grounds in droves, including the crew of the *Gleam*. "In one of the most touching incidents of the funeral," the *Baltimore Sun* reported, as the funeral cortege passed by on its way to the cemetery, the captain's "frame was convulsed with grief."²⁰ Funeral bunting was draped on the offices of the B&O and RG&S, as well as the Western National Bank, where Harry served as a director. Baltimore newspapers ran editorials extoling his "quiet, unassuming nature," "his liberality, [and] the young men whom he helped in their struggles for education or business success, the asylums, the hospitals, the public and private charities into which contributions flowed in a stream so steady and so silent."²¹ Longtime general manager Charles Nitze took over at RG&S. For the first time since the family patriarch, the elder Robert Garrett, started the firm nearly seventy years earlier, a Garrett no longer presided over that company.

All hope of Robert II's recovery vanished the day Harry died. He spent the remainder of his life in relative seclusion at his estates—Mount Vernon Place, Uplands, Newport, and Deer Park—and in taking occasional trips to Europe. The former bon vivant and man-about-town withdrew from his usual social clubs and activities. "He sought no society and saw only members of his family or very intimate friends."²² He imagined himself to be Edward, Prince of Wales. Mary Frick, Robert's sympathetic wife, hired impersonators and decorated their home to replicate the royal court.

In August 1890, William Frick visited his daughter and son-in-law at the fashionable French resort of Aix-les-Bains, intending to have Robert II sign a power of

attorney to transfer the remainder of his B&O stocks to RG&S. Frick reported to John Cowen that Robert “was incapable of connecting ideas—speaks hardly at all & resists every effort to make him dress, walk, & even eat.” Frick added that, “under these circumstances, it is quite out of the question for us to procure Mr. Garrett’s signature on any paper whatsoever.”²³

Six years later, Robert’s condition had not improved. In July 1896, Robert II, Mary Frick, and Robert’s personal physician, Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, a young Harvard medical school graduate and Robert’s fulltime physician, traveled to Deer Park, where they stayed in Harry’s cottage. On the morning of July 29, Jacobs and Robert had gone out riding, the doctor later reported to Robert’s sister Mary. “Suddenly, Robert was seized with alarming symptoms of heart failure and began to sink rapidly and had a high fever and weak pulse.”²⁴ Jacobs rushed Robert to the cottage, but “all hopes to save him were in vain.” Robert soon died; he was 49.

While Robert and his family were traveling around the world after his resignation from the railroad presidency in 1887, his sister Mary had made a bold move. She staged a power coup, wresting control of the majority of Robert’s share of B&O stocks and removing him as an executor of their father’s estate. After Harry’s death, and then Robert’s, Mary appointed two new executors for the Garrett estate to fill the vacancies: William Frick and Charles F. Mayer, president of the Consolidation Coal Company and a longtime friend of John Garrett’s. For all intents and purposes, Mary became “the practical head of the Garrett family.”²⁵

Robert II’s successor at the B&O, Samuel Spencer, faced the formidable job of untangling John Garrett’s—and, to an extent, Robert’s—accounting labyrinth. A brilliant, no-nonsense railroad man, Spencer knew he had to enforce much-needed, overdue reforms at the company and alleviate its enormous \$9 million debt.²⁶ After the B&O’s 1888 *Annual Report* reflected some of Spencer’s efforts to reform the company’s finances, the *Railroad Gazette* wrote: “For the first time in many years we are given a straight-forward account of the conditions of the Baltimore & Ohio R.R. The report does credit to President Spencer’s management.” The *Gazette* concluded: “The condition of the property a year ago was much worse than was supposed at the time. Not only were the securities over valued, but the apparent earnings of the company were exaggerated by tricks of book-keeping.”²⁷

Despite his good intentions to bring solvency to the B&O, Spencer made a grievous misstep. He publicly criticized John Garrett’s and Robert II’s management, writing in the 1888 *Annual Report* that his goal was “to keep expenditures of the company at all times within its resources, and to decrease it[s] floating indebtedness”—a direct slap in the face to the Garretts’ financial stewardship of the company.²⁸ For Mary, who held much of the control over the Garretts’ B&O stocks and idolized her father’s memory, that meant only one thing: Spencer had to go. Mary lobbied for Spencer’s

resignation, and, with the help of pro-Garrett factions on the board, he was fired after one year and four days in office. Mary soon found a candidate much more to her liking: Charles Mayer, who also served as a co-trustee of her father's estate. "Once more, the Baltimore and Ohio will be dominated by the Garretts," the *Chicago Daily Tribune* speculated in 1888.²⁹

But that domination was short lived. By 1896, following the devastating and lingering effects of the Depression of 1893 and the alleged "deficiencies in accounting and bookkeeping" during the Garrett years, the company could no longer withstand its debt load; interest payments piled up and could not be paid.³⁰ The company was forced into receivership, and the courts appointed a reorganization committee to restructure the firm and sort out its finances. The B&O was not alone; between 1894 and 1898, nearly one-quarter of the nation's rail network—including the Erie, the Northern Pacific, the Santa Fe, and the Union Pacific Railroads, jointly representing 40,000 miles of track—all faced similar fates.³¹

Adding to the public humiliation of the B&O's financial insolvency, the reorganization committee commissioned Stephen Little, a longtime accountant for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, to analyze the B&O's finances from 1888 to 1896. In the same month that Robert II died—July 1896—Little issued his report, which included thirty-five pages of text and appendices documenting detailed expenses and income. It is not known if Robert was aware of the report or, if he was, whether it triggered his sudden death. The report cited six specific areas where the B&O had misrepresented its financial affairs, primarily in overstating its net income, mischarging for worn-out equipment, and understating its liabilities.³² The *New York Times* stated that "Mr. Little's examination of the books revealed the floating debt was nearer to \$15,000,000 than \$6,000,000 and that the accounts of the company had been so manipulated as to conceal the actual condition of the company."³³ Not everyone agreed with the scathing report. A review committee appointed by the B&O found that of Little's six main points, "one is partly wrong, four entirely wrong, and only one is right."³⁴ The B&O's review committee asserted that Little "had made damaging disclosure[s] on American railroad management." The *Railroad Gazette* concurred, finding that Little had been too critical, and, for the most part, the issue was put to rest.

But had John Garrett really been an accounting trickster or a fraudster for twenty-six years? Had he deliberately engaged, as William Keyser claimed, in a "dangerous mode of financiering"? The answer is difficult to ascertain, since "the financial history of the Baltimore and Ohio in the postwar decades was little different from that of dozens of other American railroads during those years."³⁵ During Garrett's tenure there were few, if any, uniformly accepted railroad accounting standards, nor would there be until 1887, when Congress passed the Interstate Commerce Act to

regulate the railroad industry, particularly its monopolies and price fixing. In addition, the passage of the Hepburn Act in 1906 empowered the Interstate Commerce Commission to gain access to railroads' financial records and mandate accounting standards. "With respect to accounting standards, the accounting profession lacked sufficient influence to develop them in the 1880s."³⁶ During the height of John Garrett's presidency of the B&O, in the 1870s and 1880s, railroad accounting was highly uncertain and unfettered. The great modern gods of accurate finance, obsolescence, and depreciation had hardly begun to show their heads.

Although the B&O established its own accounting system in its early years, one that served as a model for the nascent railroad industry, it is possible that as the B&O rapidly expanded in the post–Civil War years, determining the true costs of the company became more complex and difficult. During Garrett's tenure as its head, the B&O bought and leased several lines to connect with key markets, and each would have had its own accounting system. Bringing such disparate methodologies into conformity would have been a monumental—if not impossible—task. Fraudulent accounting in that industry was not uncommon, particularly with startup railroads, when promoters of local lines might have had to resort to shifting funds within their financial books to enhance the appearance of profitability for a company, in order to entice investors.

It is very probable that as Garrett expanded the B&O almost simultaneously to Pittsburgh, Chicago, and into the South in the 1870s, and to the Northeast in the 1880s—fighting the Pennsylvania Railroad and other competitors at every turn—he downplayed the company's mounting debt and losses. Instead, he focused on the financial advantages such expansion would bring to the B&O, as well as on its benefits for the commercial development of the nation. Annual reports served as the most important public documentation of a railroad's fiscal health, and Garrett fully understood that the information the reports conveyed was vitally important to gain investor confidence, particularly in the securities market.

More than likely he resorted to obfuscating the B&O's fiscal liabilities. A debt-ridden railroad often "disguise[d] to a greater or less extent its floating debt, and to ignore engagements on paper which have not matured."³⁷ Garrett may have believed, perhaps legitimately, that by enhancing the B&O's true bottom line, he was ensuring the company's survival, a goal similarly evident in his long-term plan for his heirs' shares of B&O stock. It is very possible that he obscured the financial health of the company, not so much to enrich his own coffers, but to keep the B&O in business.

For three years, the B&O's reorganization wound its way through the courts, made all the more complicated by Garrett's twenty-year holding period for the family's shares. Mary and her co-executors deposited their shares with the court-appointed reorganization committee. By 1899, the committee completed the company's restruc-

turing and the receivership ended. Financial analyst John Moody reported that the company “was in splendid condition to take advantage of the tide of commercial and industrial prosperity which was just beginning to flow.”³⁸

But those who “took advantage” of the B&O’s solvency were not Garretts. As John Garrett had always feared, syndicates outside of Baltimore bought the controlling shares of the company. The B&O, once the pride of Baltimore, the spark that ignited the nation’s transportation revolution in 1828, and the source of the Garrett fortune for almost a half century, left Baltimore’s and the Garretts’ control in the 1890s. Not only did the ownership of the company change, but so did its management policies. Long gone were the days of John Garrett’s tight, domineering control, mostly, as the *New York Times* opined in 1890, “because no one is strong enough in his seat to repeat his autocracy.”³⁹

During the B&O’s upheaval and the transition of its ownership, the family that had been integral to the company’s success for nearly fifty years stayed out of the public eye. “The Garretts, as a family, have been very quiet for a number of years,” the *New York Times* observed.⁴⁰ But much had been going on behind the scenes. Garrett’s children became estranged and spent little time in Baltimore, or with each other. Mary had long been resentful of her brothers’ easy ride to the top of the B&O and RG&S, feeling certain that her inherent abilities and interest in business, particularly the B&O, were equal—if not superior—to those of her brothers. Charles Nitze, now heading RG&S, impeded Mary from properly executing her father’s complex estate. He prevented her from seeing the estate’s accounts, which were held by RG&S. After a decade of frustration, convinced that she had been short changed in her inheritance, Mary brought suit against the family in 1896, hiring several top-notch attorneys to plead her case, including railroad attorney Robert de Forest, brother to both her friend Julia and designer Lockwood. It was the final breach. She would seldom see her once-cherished family, including her beloved nephews—Harry’s sons—again.

After Robert II’s death, Mary Frick married Dr. Henry Barton Jacobs, her husband’s personal physician and traveling companion for many years. Mrs. Jacobs devoted much time to greatly expanding the palatial home in Mount Vernon Place, under the supervision of architects Stanford White and John Russell Pope. Today, the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion, as it is known, is the only structure in the country that combines the work of these two famous architects.⁴¹ The residence eventually encompassed 40,000 square feet and was adorned with Tiffany windows, Lockwood de Forest flourishes, an art gallery, and an atrium with a tropical garden and a resident monkey. Mary Frick Garrett Jacobs also built a summer villa in Newport, Rhode Island; Whiteholme was completed in 1901.⁴² To honor her first husband, she established the Robert Garrett Memorial Fund for Children at Johns Hopkins

Hospital. It provided the seed money for what today has grown into the sprawling Johns Hopkins Children's Center in East Baltimore. She donated Uplands, her ancestral estate in Baltimore County, to the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland and converted it into a "home for lonely church women unable to provide in whole or part for their own maintenance and support."⁴³ She also contributed her massive art collection to the Baltimore Museum of Art. It is now housed in the Mary Frick Jacobs wing, which was designed by her favorite architect, John Russell Pope.

Harry's widow, Alice, and their three sons traveled through Europe and the Near East for two years after Harry's death. Alice then moved to Princeton, New Jersey, while her sons attended college there. In 1896, the oldest son, John Work Garrett II (1872–1942), joined RG&S but spent little time at the firm. He became an explorer and a diplomat, serving in overseas posts for thirty-two years. Harry's middle son, Horatio (1873–1896), died of bone cancer at age 23. The youngest son, Robert III (1875–1861), became a star athlete. At the 1896 Olympics in Athens, Greece, he won gold medals in the discus throwing and shot put competitions, won second place in the broad jump, and tied for second place in the high jump. He traveled to the Middle East as a member of the American Archeological Expedition and became a partner in RG&S in 1907.⁴⁴ Harry's magnificent Evergreen House is now a museum and library owned by Johns Hopkins University and open to the public. It houses Harry's renowned rare book collection and exemplifies Gilded Age and fin-de-siècle architectural and cultural elegance.⁴⁵

Mary Elizabeth Garrett, John's once-overlooked and thwarted daughter, followed in her father's footsteps as a national leader, not in railroading—a path closed to her—but in philanthropy and reform. Mary's many activities to foster women's advancements in medicine, education, and suffrage made her a favorite of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century press, always eager for news not only of her latest feminist activism, but also of her behind-the-scenes machinations at the B&O. "She is the most progressive woman of wealth our country has produced," noted the indomitable Frances Willard, president of the largest women's organization in the country during that era, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.⁴⁶

After inheriting her \$6 million fortune, Mary vowed to "use her father's trust and money to live a life worthy of him and to help women."⁴⁷ She gained fame for what is called "coercive philanthropy," essentially bribing male trustees of educational institutions to change policies to advance women.⁴⁸ Although she always faced opposition in her philanthropies, her years as "Papa's secretary," sitting with her father at railroad meetings and watching as he hammered out deals with his opponents, taught her well how to stand firm. And she always won.

Mary, along with her close circle of friends, opened the Bryn Mawr School, a preparatory school for girls in Baltimore that offered lessons in science, mathe-

matics, foreign language, and physical education, all subjects traditionally taught to boys, but, at the time, deemed far too difficult for girls. The founders hoped to dispel widely held beliefs about women's intellectual and physical inferiority. Mary financed the school's first building, for \$500,000. The school attracted national headlines for its daring curriculum and soon gained fame as "Miss Garrett's School for Girls."⁴⁹ Mary next focused her energies and wealth on providing the endowment to open the medical school at Johns Hopkins University, the one her father had publicly criticized for its long construction delay. But she did far more than just donate the money. She imposed strict conditions, insisting that the new medical school admit women equally to men and that it be a graduate school, the first in the nation to require such standards. Her gift in 1893 revolutionized American medicine and medical philanthropy.

Mary continued her "coercive philanthropy" by offering \$10,000 annually to the trustees of Bryn Mawr College to appoint her longtime friend, M. Carey Thomas, then serving as dean, to the presidency of that women's college. After a year of Mary's persistence, in 1894 the trustees of the cash-strapped school acquiesced to Mary's irresistible offer, providing the funding needed for the college to become one of the prestigious Seven Sisters institutions.⁵⁰ Not yet finished with her determination to advance women's opportunities, Mary next concentrated on the suffrage movement, which was waning in the 1890s from a lack of funds and dwindling membership. She helped bring the National American Woman Suffrage Association to Baltimore in 1906 and, with that movement's coffers nearly empty, she raised \$60,000 in record time to keep it going. Mary did not live to see the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920, giving women the right to vote. She died in 1915, while living at Bryn Mawr College.⁵¹

Like her father, Mary's great interest was the B&O and its future. "She worshipped her father and her most ardent hope is to see the great road which he built and brought to such importance kept up to the position where he left it and perpetuate it as one of the great institutions of the country," the *Chicago Daily Tribune* explained.⁵² Mary was the only one of John Garrett's children who hungered for more-direct involvement in her beloved father's B&O. "She possessed business capabilities ranking among the financiers of America," the *Baltimore News* wrote.⁵³

More than likely, John Garrett would not have been surprised that his daughter achieved such widespread respect and fame. Mary insisted that her father believed that "if a woman is competent to inherit, she is competent to share in life's activities."⁵⁴ Many agreed. "Miss Mary Garrett is an extraordinary woman," the *New York Times* explained in 1888, "and [except] that she is a woman, would to-day be president of that road."⁵⁵ But society restricted women from such lofty corporate heights. "She is probably better posted on railroads and their intricacies than any women in

the world,” the *Times* article asserted. Perhaps the future of the B&O might have been written differently had Garrett’s daughter had the opportunity to participate in the business she so loved, which had been denied her for so long. “If the boys were only like Mary, what a satisfaction that would be for me,” John Garrett once commented. “I have always wished that Mary was a boy. I know she could carry on my work after I am gone.”⁵⁶

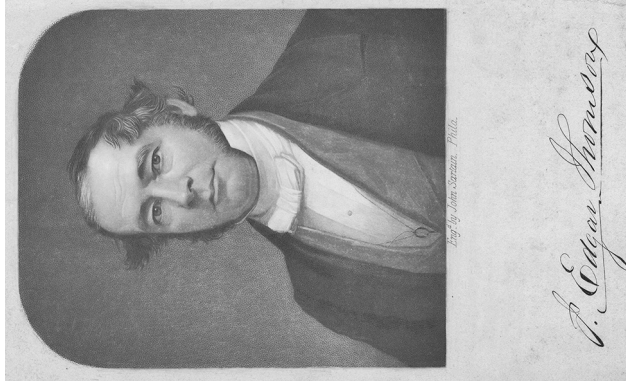


Figure 19. After the war, Garrett faced many new competitors—Commodore Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Andrew Carnegie, among others. His long-standing rivalry with the Pennsylvania Railroad did not abate, but instead intensified. Since it was not hindered by wartime damages and obligations, as the B&O had been, the Pennsylvania's president, J. Edgar Thomson (*right*), and its vice president, Thomas Scott (*left*), stayed one step ahead of Garrett in reaching both the emerging markets of Chicago and New York and the war-ravaged South. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (for Thomson) and the Daniel Carroll Toomey Collection (for Scott).

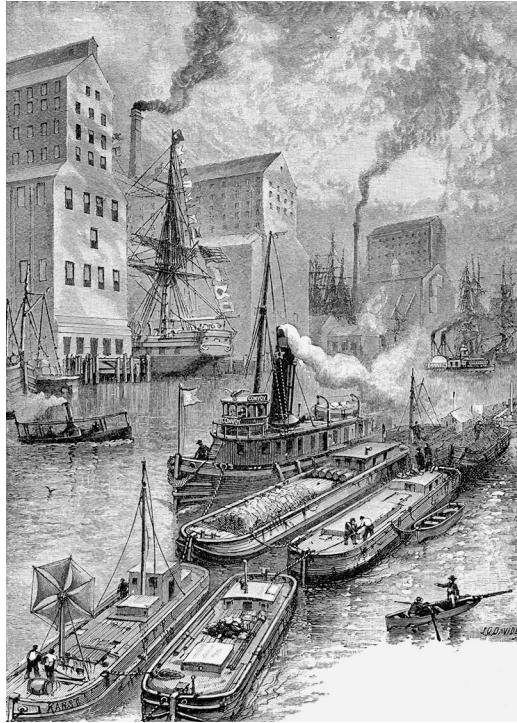


Figure 20. Rebuilding Baltimore's postwar economy became one of Garrett's main objectives. He expanded Locust Point, on Baltimore's Inner Harbor, to become the city's primary transportation hub. The complex included gigantic grain elevators facing the harbor (*top*), and dozens of railroad tracks for cars bringing valuable commodities to be exported, especially coal (*bottom*). The B&O's Baltimore–Bremen line brought nearly a half million immigrants to the United States through Locust Point in the last decades of the nineteenth century; many stayed in Baltimore, while others took B&O trains to points farther west. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 21. After the war, Garrett developed tourism in the “delightful and salubrious” mountains of Western Maryland. On July 4, 1872, the B&O broke ground for the Deer Park Hotel, pictured here. This luxurious building and its grounds featured electric lights, elevators, swimming pools, Turkish baths, bowling alleys, golf courses, and the perennial Victorian favorites, tennis and croquet. A year later, Garrett started construction on the similarly opulent Oakland Hotel, a mile away. Garrett’s successful tourism ventures brought much commerce to the region, which eventually was named Garrett County. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

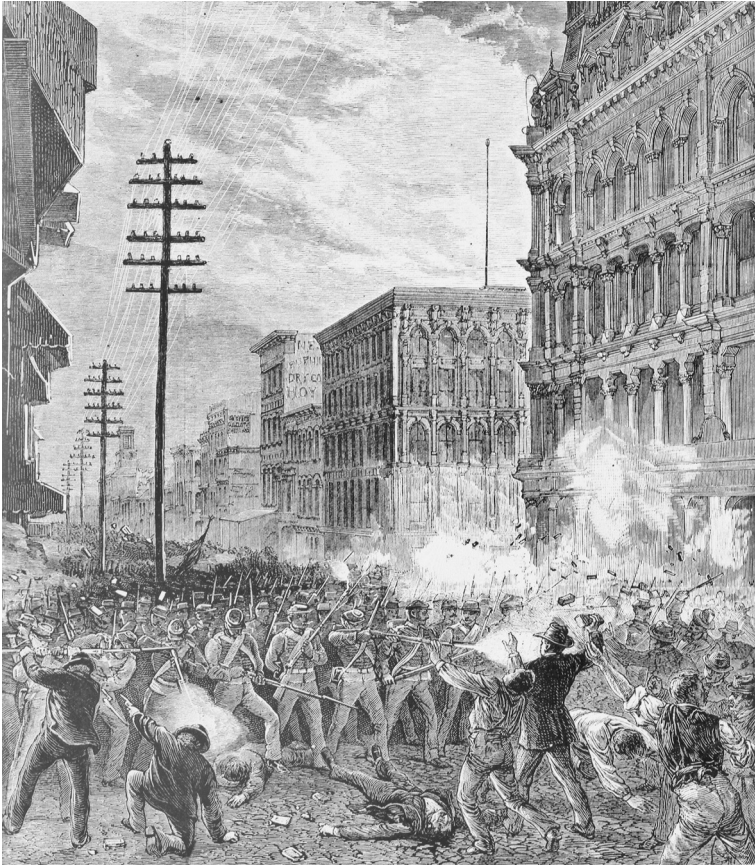


Figure 22. Garrett faced one of his greatest postwar challenges with the violent labor strike of 1877, which was precipitated when he slashed B&O workers' pay in two back-to-back wage cuts. The strike started on B&O lines in Martinsburg and quickly spread nationwide to other sectors of the economy. Here, the Fifth and Sixth Regiments of the Maryland National Guard try to quell the riot in Baltimore after being called out by Governor John Carroll. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 23. Garrett commissioned E. Francis Baldwin, the architect for several B&O hotels and stations, to design the new B&O headquarters. When completed in 1882, the five-story granite and brick building gained widespread fame and stood as Baltimore's tallest, most modern building, featuring hydraulic elevators and high-ceilinged offices. "The effect of the building is massive," the *American Architect and Building News* pronounced, and "the execution of the work of the exterior is apparently faultless." Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 24. At the time of John W. Garrett's death, the B&O's Roundhouse, designed by Baldwin, was nearing completion. It ranked as the largest "round" building in the world at the time—although it actually features twenty-two sides. The small trapezoidal building in the front is the Mount Clare Depot, built in 1851 to replace a wooden railroad station, the first in the Western Hemisphere. The long building with the tower is the Roundhouse Annex, constructed immediately after the completion of the Roundhouse in 1884, containing offices, the company's print shop, a library, and a temporary morgue for workers killed on the job. The complex now houses the B&O Railroad Museum, its archives, and its offices. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 25. Recognizing the B&O's unique place in railroading history, in 1880, Garrett hired "Major" Joseph G. Pangborn to create a public relations program for the company. Aside from writing colorful promotional books and collecting early B&O locomotives, Pangborn commissioned elegant posters to advertise B&O routes. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

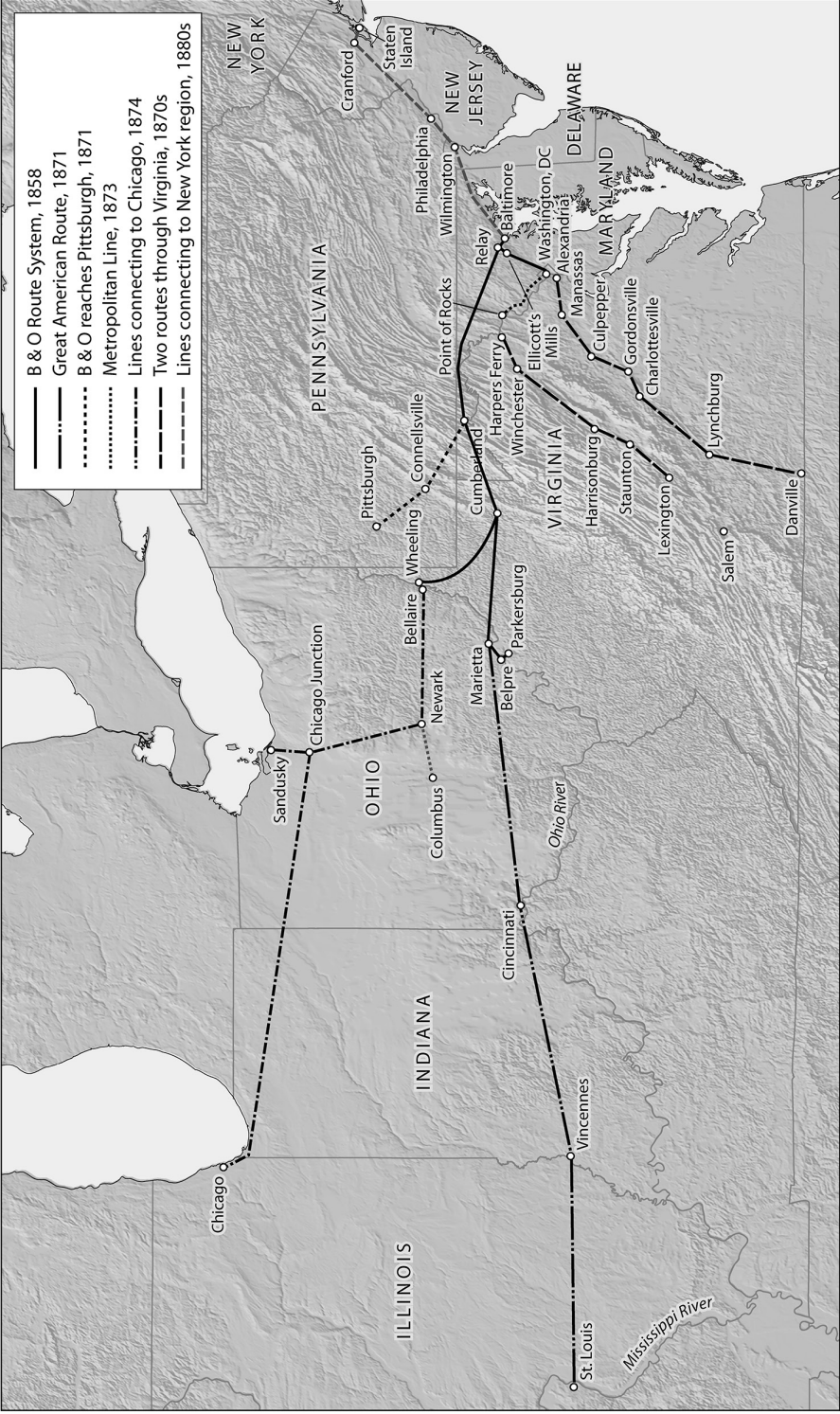


Figure 26. In 1858, when John Garrett took over the presidency of the railroad, B&O-owned tracks reached Washington, DC, and Wheeling and Parkersburg (on the Ohio River). During the twenty-six years of his presidency, Garrett expanded the company to the west, the south, and the northeast, largely by means of mergers, leasing agreements and various arrangements with connecting lines, or the construction of new B&O tracks to fill in the gaps to reach important commercial markets. The B&O and its affiliated lines reached Pittsburgh in 1871, as well as Newark, Ohio, where the line headed north and then west to reach Chicago in 1874. Garrett solidified connections for the Great American Route through Cincinnati to St. Louis, and built tracks from Washington, DC, to Point of Rocks, Maryland, in 1873. He initiated two routes through Virginia: in the Piedmont from Alexandria to Danville, and from Harpers Ferry up the Shenandoah Valley. By the time of his death in 1884, the B&O had liquidated the Danville project and the route up the valley was tenuously nearing Lexington but was blocked by competitors from reaching Garrett's goal of Salem. Garrett also was patching together agreements with other lines to get to Staten Island in New York Harbor. Cartography courtesy of Bill Nelson.



Figure 27. In the last years of his life, Garrett's health acutely diminished. Rachel had stood by him for thirty-seven years of marriage. "I have never seen in all my life an instance where man and wife were more completely a unit," the family's minister eulogized at Rachel's funeral in November 1883. Garrett, brokenhearted over his wife's death, died ten months later. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.

EPILOGUE

Legacy

FOR MANY WHO KNEW John Garrett in his final years, he seemed “a thoroughly disappointed and unhappy man,” concerned for his legacy and the future of the B&O.¹ Yet when the news of his death flashed over the wires, the national press coverage and outpouring of accolades contradicted his doubts, writing only of his many accomplishments. “He Was a Mastermind,” the *Philadelphia Press* headlined; “Unrivaled among the Railroad Kings,” the *Pittsburgh Dispatch* insisted; “One of the Most Prominent Men in the Financial Circles of the Country,” the *New York Times* declared; and, from the *Washington Post*, “A Great Financier Endowed with Executive Abilities of the Highest Order.”² The Baltimore papers ran special supplements, with memorials and testimonials from colleagues, companies, organizations, merchants, and manufacturers Garrett had known over the years.

John Garrett should not have worried about his legacy. He left an indelible mark on the railroading industry, advancing it through its formative years; on Maryland, in his determination to ensure its prosperity; and, particularly, on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, presiding over the company for nearly half of its fifty-seven-year history and guiding it through its most tumultuous—and most expansive—years. Many of the projects started during his B&O presidency grew stronger, surviving well into the twentieth century and leaving a lasting mark in Maryland and in railroading.

At the time of John Garrett’s death on September 26, 1884, B&O director William Findley Burns noted that few people realized that when Garrett became president, “he had saved the company from ruin in 1858.” Burns added that “a generation has grown up since Mr. Garrett was elected president and those whose recollections enable them to appreciate the difficulties he has overcome are passing away.”³ The memory of Garrett’s “tricks of bookkeeping” faded within a few years, replaced by a more reasoned view of his accomplishments and successes. He had persevered amid fierce competition to keep the B&O in the running, he had set aside personal political

allegiances to support Lincoln's efforts to preserve the Union, and he had helped to once again make Baltimore a prosperous port city after the Civil War. Garrett "continued to be the leading topic of conversation in business and social circles," the *Baltimore American* reported, years after his death. "Not just the older men, who had known him in his work through the successful development of the Baltimore and Ohio, but the younger class, who had been impressed and benefited by his economic and business methods, his public charities, and what he had achieved for the city and the whole country."⁴

"Garrett's Road" is no longer controlled by John W. Garrett, and his hopes for a B&O dynasty collapsed long ago, but not the Garrett legacy. John Garrett spent his adult life helping to bring prosperity to Baltimore, first through being a partner in the far-reaching financial web of Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated, and, for the next quarter of a century, by running and expanding the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. When he assumed office, the B&O had just 525 miles of line, one extending from Baltimore to two terminals on the Ohio River and the other to Washington, DC. When he died, he left a 1,711-mile system that reached Chicago, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Columbus, and tapped the edges of Lake Erie and New York Harbor.⁵ The company had grown from 4,500 employees when Garrett took over in 1858 to more than 20,000 at his death.⁶ The inventory of equipment also grew exponentially, from 236 locomotives, 3,668 freight cars, and 124 passenger cars in 1858 to 666 locomotives, 21,408 freight cars, and 504 passenger cars during Garrett's B&O presidency.⁷

Garrett fought to maintain the B&O's status as a major competitor in the Eastern trunk line world and established the foundation for its strong future presence in the critical markets of Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Cincinnati. Commercially and financially, the B&O traditionally would rank third among the Eastern trunk lines—the Erie Railroad inevitably was hindmost—but, as its big Eastern rivals collapsed in the 1970s, it would be the B&O that survived the longest. In the end, "America's first railroad" lasted as a discrete corporation for 160 years, an achievement for which John Garrett could take more than a little credit.

At the time of his death, Garrett's B&O clearly remained a work in progress. It would be left to his successors to round out and fill in what John Garrett did not do, could not afford to do, or never thought of. Over time, they would build on Garrett's base and expand the railroad to a 6,400-mile system, reaching such centers as St. Louis, Cleveland, Toledo, the Mahoning Valley (straddling northeast Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania), Louisville, and Buffalo—including a new, direct route to Chicago from Pittsburgh.

Underway at the time of his death was the new line that would finally make the B&O a contender in New York. Six years after Garrett's demise, with his long-

dreamed-of Baltimore–New York Harbor line completed, his successors created one of the finest services and memorable images in railroading, christened the “Royal Blue Line.” Worlds away from when the first B&O passengers sat strapped atop railroad cars, or when wood- or coal-burning stoves often filled B&O coaches with black smoke or caused them to catch on fire, riders on the Royal Blue Line could luxuriate in opulent cars decorated in the Gay Nineties’ signature royal blue, floridly trimmed with gold striping. The *Baltimore Sun* pronounced that the Royal Blue “may have been one of the most famous named trains in history.”⁸ The august *Railway Age* trade magazine described the new Royal Blue Line equipment as “the climax in railroad car building.”⁹ That regal tradition continued off and on until the mid-twentieth century. The Royal Blue Line eventually outlived its usefulness as a passenger carrier and, after 1958, devoted itself exclusively to freight. It continues in operation under the B&O’s lineal successor, CSX Transportation, and now, more importantly than ever, serves as the East Coast’s principal freight corridor.

In 1923, thirty-nine years after his death, John Garrett’s wish to open his Mount Vernon Place mansion as an art museum finally became a reality.¹⁰ The mansion, built by Robert I in 1857 and embellished greatly with a two-story art gallery by his son, served as the first venue for the Baltimore Museum of Art before the city could afford to erect a dedicated building. John Garrett’s impressive assemblage of artworks formed much of the early collection. The museum opened in the Garrett mansion on February 22, 1923, with 12,000 visitors that day, many, no doubt, eager to see the opulent residence owned by three generations of one of Baltimore’s premier families.¹¹

Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated continued until 1974, when it merged with Baltimore’s Alex. Brown and Sons, the first investment bank in the United States, founded in 1800. Alex. Brown, in turn, was integrated into Deutsche Bank in 1999. It is quaint to imagine that traces of Robert Garrett’s “greasy grocery” business still exist in a mammoth global financial corporation.

Garrett’s bold tourism enterprise, the elegant B&O hotels built in the 1870s in Garrett County, Maryland, also are gone—long ago destroyed by fire. In 1886, John’s daughter Mary invited a longtime family friend, President Grover Cleveland, and his bride Frances to honeymoon at the Garrett cottage. It, too, burned to the ground several years later. In 1906, John Garrett’s grandsons—two of Harry’s sons, John Work Garrett II and Robert Garrett III—donated 1,917 acres of undeveloped land in Garrett County, inherited from their grandfather, to the state of Maryland, on the condition that the state initiate conservation of forest lands—an idea unique at the time—to protect such natural areas through public ownership. This gift from the Garrett family has evolved into what today is Maryland’s state system of forests, parks, wildlife areas, and natural and environmental sites.¹² John Garrett’s initiatives

in the 1870s opened that region to commercial success and it now serves as a popular tourist destination.

The grand country estate of Montebello, where Garrett lived the “life of a nobleman,” was sold and parceled into subdivisions. On November 16, 1885, a year after Garrett died, his prized Montebello thoroughbreds were sold at public auction in Baltimore by Wm. Seemuller & Company. Garrett’s beloved fillies, broodmares, and stallions, among them Cicero, Sultan, and the one named for Herbert Spencer, were sold with the tap of the auctioneer’s gavel.¹³

In 1893, Baltimore celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of two of John Garrett’s great success stories: the expansion of Locust Point after the Civil War, and the B&O’s Baltimore to Bremen line. Celebrants gathered on March 21 to cheer the “more than half million passengers brought to America and the 75,000 carried to Europe” from 1868 to 1892.¹⁴ “No man connected with Baltimore has ever been so important to its development,” the *Baltimore Sun* opined of the legacy of the man who fulfilled his dream to once again make Baltimore a major commercial port in the postwar years.¹⁵

Locust Point no longer serves its original purpose. The enormous warehouses that stored valuable commodities to be shipped worldwide; the huge wharves where, over the decades, steamers from Europe brought tens of thousands of immigrants to start their new lives; and the busy B&O tracks that came and went from the entrepôt no longer are in business. Today, a vibrant residential neighborhood and a scattering of industries envelop the area, reminders of the industrialism that made Baltimore a major East Coast port.

Thanks to “Major” Joseph G. Pangborn, the company’s prime showman, the B&O memorialized Garrett at the 1893 world’s fair in Chicago. A statue of John Garrett stood in the center of the B&O’s exhibit, the fair’s largest railroad display, which dominated the center of the one-acre Transportation Hall.¹⁶ By that year, the United States contained 175,000 miles of track, more than half of the world’s total mileage.¹⁷

Garrett’s legacy is seen as readily in bricks and mortar: in the B&O’s magnificent architecture, its graceful bridges, and its sturdy railroad stations—many now national historical landmarks—along the edge of the old B&O rail lines. It can also be found in the Western Maryland county that bears his name; in the countless little towns that sprang up as B&O tracks pushed westward, when Garrett had hoped to develop the interior of the expanding country; in the many cultural institutions he supported in his “beloved Baltimore” and beyond; in the recognition of his role in helping Lincoln preserve the Union; and, perhaps most significantly, in his efforts to promote and preserve the B&O’s importance in railroad history.

In August 1898, crews working on the track leading into the Mount Clare Shops unearthed a long-forgotten artifact: the cornerstone placed with such pride seventy

years earlier, on July 4, 1828, when cheering crowds celebrated the inauguration of Baltimore's new "rail road."¹⁸ Their hopes that the new Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company would bring continued prosperity to their city had been realized—far beyond what anyone could have imagined at the time. The little horse-drawn wagon on tracks had changed the nation. The cornerstone still is on display in the B&O Roundhouse, now the home of the B&O Railroad Museum. When the Roundhouse was completed in 1884, it stood as one of the Railroad King's crowning achievements during his twenty-six-year reign.

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Acknowledgments

I am grateful to many friends and colleagues for sharing my seven-year journey on the B&O. No history of the B&O could be written without the valuable contributions of some of the B&O's premier historians: Courtney B. Wilson, executive director of the B&O Railroad Museum; Herbert H. Harwood Jr., author of twelve books on railroading, including three on the B&O; Civil War historian and author Daniel Carroll Toomey, whose most recent book, *The War Came by Train: The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad during the Civil War*, complements an exhibit of the same name that he guest curated at the B&O Railroad Museum; and James A. Diltz, author of *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, the Nation's First Railroad, 1828–1855*, considered to be among the seminal histories of the B&O in its first thirty years. They each read parts or all of the manuscript, added valuable comments and criticism, and—as importantly—provided encouragement and enthusiasm. I thank them all for their friendship and important contributions to this project.

Visiting the B&O Railroad Museum, housed in the magnificent Roundhouse that Garrett commissioned in 1883, is always a special treat for visitors. I, too, enjoyed my many research trips to the museum's Hays T. Watkins Research Library, adjacent to the Roundhouse. Located within the archives are the B&O's most treasured documents, chronicling the company's renowned history. The aged, fragile documents—ledgers, Board of Directors' minute books, treasurer's accounts, and hundreds of thousands of pieces of correspondence—are meticulously protected, ensuring that the B&O's unique place in railroading history is preserved for posterity. I am grateful for the assistance of the staff, particularly archivist Ryan McPherson, who shared his extensive knowledge of the B&O's collections; chief curator David Shackelford; and curator Jane Harper. They each helped to answer puzzling questions or track down hard-to-find documents and images.

The B&O Railroad Museum is fortunate to count a cadre of more than a hundred loyal volunteers who share their expert knowledge of the massive trains on display and lead visitors on a fascinating journey through the B&O's history. They also assist in other valuable efforts, and Paul S. Bridge is one such volunteer extraordinaire. For many years, Paul has delved into the Garrett Papers at the B&O archives and gleaned important, long-forgotten information about John Garrett, which he graciously shared with me.

Once again, as with my research into Mary Elizabeth Garrett's life story, James Rea Garrett, John W. Garrett's great-great grandson, extended extraordinary generosity in sharing

the family's extensive collection, housed in the Library of Congress. The staff of the H. Furlong Baldwin Library at the Maryland Historical Society, particularly Francis O'Neill—a treasure trove of all things relating to Baltimore and Maryland history—provided valuable assistance. I am also grateful for the support of James Stimpert, senior reference archivist, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University; James Archer Abbott, the Philip Franklin Wagley Director and Curator, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University; the Board of Trustees of the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion Endowment Fund (on which I served for nine years) for their dedicated work in preserving one of Baltimore's grandest Gilded Age architectural gems, the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion on Mount Vernon Place; and the staff of the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Dixie Barlow carefully reviewed the page proofs for this book, as she did with *Mary Elizabeth Garrett*, and added helpful suggestions; Albert J. Churella, author of many books and articles on railroading, including his most recent, the impressive *Building an Empire, 1846–1917*, volume 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad*, helped to demystify some of the perplexities of early railroad accounting and management; and James Durkay and Lisa Kier assisted with obtaining Garrett family photographs. The manuscript was greatly enhanced by the close scrutiny of Kathleen M. Capels, an astute copyeditor and, fortunately for a book on railroading, a train enthusiast as well. Thomas Broughton-Willett completed the final stages of the editing process by expertly indexing the book.

Bob Brugger figures prominently in this research, as he did in the first project on which we collaborated, *Mary Elizabeth Garrett*. Bob is an exacting editor, worthy of the success and accolades he has achieved in his long publishing career. I am grateful for his friendship, his guidance, and especially his perseverance as he continued to encourage this project to its completion. Behind every author usually stands a supportive family. My husband of forty-four years, John, has withstood the perils of living with an author always fretting about an awkward sentence or frantically searching for that elusive quotation buried deep in a stack of notes. My daughter, Libby Sander, and son-in-law, Brock Read, both talented journalists and editors, helped to smooth out some of those awkward sentences and provided much-needed equilibrium. I thank them all for their patience and optimism.

Notes

Abbreviations

B&O Museum	Hays T. Watkins Research Library, B&O Railroad Museum, Baltimore
BMC	Special Collections, Canady Library, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania
EBG	Elizabeth Barbara Garrett
HSG	Henry Stouffer Garrett
JWG	John W. Garrett
LOC	Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC
MEG	Mary Elizabeth Garrett
MEG memoir	Mary Elizabeth Garrett memoir, box "Mary Garrett Diaries, Etc.," folder Fi-89-1, MEG Collection, BMC
MHS	H. Furlong Baldwin Library, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore
NMAH	Archives, Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History, Washington, DC
RG	Robert Garrett
RG II	Robert Garrett II
RG&S	Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated

Prologue • Taking Hold of the Throttle

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Chapter 1 • The Whole Population Is in Motion

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9. Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790–1840* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1988), 3, 6, 11.
10. Dickason, Garrett Family DNA Project.
11. It is possible that her reason for moving was remarriage to a man named Ebenezer Ross, from Washington County. Margaret Garrett’s second marriage is mentioned briefly in the letters of Henry Garrett, 1852–1867, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
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13. Anecdotes are compiled from Dickason, Garrett Family DNA Project; J. H. Beers, *Commemorative Biographical Record of Washington County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: J. H. Beers, 1893); Earle R. Forest, “A History of West Middletown, Pennsylvania,” in *A History of Washington County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago: S. J. Clark, 1926), <http://history.rays-place.com/pa/wash-w-middletown.htm>.

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16. Larkin, *Reshaping of Everyday Life*, 204.

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23. Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 132.

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25. “Urban Dynamics: Agricultural History; Patuxent River Watershed,” USGS Land Cover Institute, <http://landcover.usgs.gov/urban/cbay/ag/aghist.php>.

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27. Ibid.

28. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 1:12.

29. Beirne, *Amiable Baltimoreans*, 38.

30. Semmes, *Baltimore as Seen by Visitors*, 9.

31. John S. Pancake, “Baltimore and the Embargo of 1807–1809,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 47, no. 3 (September 1952), 178.

32. Records of Robert’s business enterprises in West Middletown are found in box 1, October 27, 1778–October 1830, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

33. RG to John Stouffer, March 20, 1815, box 1, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

34. RG to Elizabeth Stouffer, January 6, 1817, box 1, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

35. RG to Elizabeth Stouffer, February 6, 1817, box 1, Garrett Family Papers, LOC. Elizabeth’s letters to Robert are not extant.

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37. Dickason, Garrett Family DNA Project.

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45. Ibid.
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47. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:9.
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60. *First Annual Report* (1827), 1, B&O Museum.
61. *Second Annual Report* (1828), 4, B&O Museum.
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63. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:14.
64. Courtney B. Wilson, *Mt. Clare: The Birthplace of American Railroad* (Lawrenceburg, IN: R. L. Ruehrwein, 1999), 1.
65. William D. Samson and Gary John Previts, “Reporting for Success: The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and Management Information, 1827–1856,” *Business and Economic History* 28 (Winter 1999), 238.
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67. William Bruce Catton, “John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874,” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1959, 29.
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73. Philip E. Thomas to RG, March 18, 1828, box 1, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
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13. N. and W. P. Goff to Robert Garrett & Company, May 2, 1834, box 7, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
14. 1840 Baltimore City census, 14th Ward, MHS.
15. JWG composition book, June 1, 1833, box 5, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
16. JWG composition book, October 1832, box 4, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
17. HSG composition book, October 1832, box 4, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
18. *Baltimore Sun*, October 14, 1867.
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20. HSG to JWG, July 15, 1850, box 51, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
21. HSG to JWG, August 7, 1850, box 51, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
22. RG to JWG, August 5, 1848, box 46, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
23. EBG to HSG, July 15, 1848, box 46, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
24. RG to JWG, April 20, 1842, box 28, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
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76. Joel E. Thomson, “Railroad Investing and the Importance of Financial Accounting Information in 1880s America,” *Accounting Historians Journal* (December 2013), 55–56.
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80. Latrobe, “B&O Railroad: Personal Reflections,” 4.
81. Shackelford, *Journey from Roads to Rails*, 23. The legend possibly began with the 1868 lecture by John H. B. Latrobe at the Maryland Institute and might have been embellished from an actual event. In 1830, B&O officials conducted a “road test” of Cooper’s locomotive when a horse-drawn carriage pulled up beside the machine. Allegedly, a “race” ensued and the horse won. Paul S. Bridge explores the many colorful possibilities of the myth and why it has endured. See Bridge, “The Legend of the Tom Thumb,” *Maryland Historical Society Magazine* 106, no. 4 (Winter 2011), 524–528.
82. Shackelford, *Journey from Roads to Rails*, 38.
83. Anecdotes are taken from Jack Larkin, *The Reshaping of Everyday Life, 1790–1840* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1988), 227–228.
84. Asa Whitney, diary, transcript of page 116, Asa Whitney Papers, Special Collections, University of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor.

85. August Mencken, *The Railroad Passenger Car: An Illustrated History of the First Hundred Years, with Accounts by Contemporary Passengers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), 121.
86. Philip Thomas to RG, January 10, 1838, box 12, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
87. Edna A. Kanely, *Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Employees, 1842 and 1852, 1855 and 1857* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, reprint 2009; originally published 1982), 46.
88. William Prescott Smith, *A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1853), 34.
89. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 36 (for grasshopper engines), 41 (for names).
90. Ibid.
91. Latrobe, “B&O Railroad: Personal Reflections,” 14.
92. Chandler, *Visible Hand*, 36.

Chapter 3 • An Era of Fine Pickings

1. *New York Morning News*, December 27, 1845. O’Sullivan first used the phrase “manifest destiny” in “The Great Nation of Futurity,” *United States Democratic Review* 6, no. 23 (July–August 1839), 426–430.
2. William G. Thomas, *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 2.
3. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidereith & Sons, 1965), 15.
4. Ibid. The Garrett family’s wealth is also noted in a list of family holdings, dated January 22, 1859, box 69, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
5. Edward Pessen, *Riches, Class, and Power before the Civil War* (Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath, 1973), 35.
6. Kevin Phillips, “How Wealth Defines Power,” *American Prospect* (April 16, 2003), <http://prospect.org/article/how-wealth-defines-power>.
7. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 1:330.
8. JWG to HSG, February 5, 1848, box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
9. RG to JWG, August 1, 1851, box 53, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
10. *New York Times*, September 28, 1884.
11. JWG to George McHenry, January 31, 1848; JWG to A. M. Bastable, January 18, 1849, box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
12. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 21.
13. R. Steen & Co. to RG&S, August 9, 1843, box 30, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
14. T. H. Campbell to RG&S, January 5, 1852; T. H. Campbell to RG&S, January 9, 1852, box 54, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
15. Bond transactions for 1840–1844 are noted throughout boxes 20–32, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
16. HSG to JWG, [date unknown], box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
17. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 19.
18. JWG to HSG, January 30, 1848, box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

19. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 19.
20. JWG to HSG, January 30, 1848, box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
21. JWG to HSG, January 14, 1848, box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
22. John D. Early to RG&S, June 15, 1850, recording an insurance payment to RG&S, box 51, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
23. Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 36.
24. Franklin Parker, *George Peabody: A Biography* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), 67.
25. *Ibid.*, 68.
26. George Peabody to “Dear Sirs,” July 15, 1853, box 17, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
27. William Garrett to RG, March 2, 1840, box 20, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
28. Carlton Jones, *Lost Baltimore: A Portfolio of Vanished Buildings* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 129.
29. Miscellaneous letter to RG&S, November 20, 1845, box 36, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
30. List of RG&S holdings, January 22, 1859, box 69, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
31. For a list of 1846 investments, see the tax records in boxes 39 and 40, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
32. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 18.
33. Clayton Coleman Hall (ed.), *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, 2 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical, 1912), 2:455.
34. Elizabeth Garrett to [housekeeper] Rachel Garrett, December 29, 1842, box 28, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
35. *Baltimore Sun*, November 16, 1883.
36. Marjorie Luckett (ed.), *Maryland Women* (Baltimore: King Brothers Press, 1942), 123.
37. Gifts are noted in the papers of MEG, folder F5, MEG Collection, BMC.
38. HSG to Elizabeth Garrett, January 13, 1847, box 29, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
39. *Ladies’ Garland* (April 15, 1837), 22. Copies of *Godey’s Lady’s Book* from 1841 to 1854 can be found in box 87, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
40. Luckett, *Maryland Women*, 123.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 63.
43. Garrett family genealogy, box 85, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
44. Hayward and Belfoure, *Baltimore Rowhouse*, 60, 61.
45. City directories for the 1850s list John W. Garrett as living at 27 Calhoun Street on Delaware Row; the 1860 city directory lists this address as number 29, most likely because the street numbering had changed. “Garrett Park” is noted in Roderick N. Ryan, *West Baltimore Neighborhoods: Sketches of Their History, 1840–1960* (Baltimore: Institute for Publication Design at the University of Baltimore, 1993), 80.
46. Hayward and Belfoure, *Baltimore Rowhouse*, 60.
47. *Ibid.*, 96.
48. MEG memoir.
49. *Ibid.*

50. Ibid.
51. JWG to Elizabeth Garrett, July 5, 1855, box 61, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
52. MEG memoir.
53. Ibid.
54. The Rieman family genealogy is noted in the Garrett Family DNA and Genealogical Research Project, directed by Donald Garrett Dickason, Princeton, New Jersey. See also boxes 20–48, April 1840–April 1849, Garrett Family Papers, LOC. Little is known about the lives of young Elizabeth and George Rieman after they came to live with Robert and Elizabeth Garrett.
55. Letters from this trip can be found in boxes 55–57, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
56. Elizabeth Garrett to “Sons and all the rest,” July 29, 1856, box 17, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
57. Noted in correspondence between JWG and his father, July 1855–May 1856, boxes 61–63, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

Chapter 4 • The Race to the Ohio River

1. Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 8–9.
2. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: The Original 1855 Edition* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, reprinted 2007), 186.
3. J. Steele to RG&S, February 14, 1850, box 50, and J. Steele to RG&S, June 26, 1850, box 51, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
4. James D. Dilts, *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, the Nation's First Railroad, 1828–1853* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 315.
5. John S. Duncan to RG&S, January 18, 1847, box 40, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
6. *Baltimore American*, April 1, 1847.
7. “Report of the Committee of Citizens of Baltimore, Who Were Appointed to Visit Pittsburgh with a View to Confer with the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad Company, 1847,” box 1, RG&S Papers, MS 2089, MHS.
8. Chauncy Brooks to John Glenn, June 19, 1847, box 42, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
9. For a detailed discussion of the western terminal controversy and its resolution, see Dilts, *Great Road*, 314–332.
10. JWG to HSG, February 2, 1848, box 44, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
11. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidereith & Sons, 1965), 24.
12. William Prescott Smith, *A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road* (Baltimore: John Murphy, 1853), 84.
13. Dilts, *Great Road*, 398.
14. Smith, *History and Description*, 155.
15. Ibid., 9.
16. David Hunter Strother, “Artists’ Excursion Over the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road,” *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (June 1859).
17. Lynn Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Film* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 21. See also “Industrial Art: The 1858 Artists’ Excursion Over the Balti-

more & Ohio Railroad,” Maryland Historical Society, December 5, 2013, www.mdhs.org/underbelly/2013/12/05/industrial-art-the-1858-artists-excursion-over-the-bo-railroad/.

18. Documents relating to RG&S’s backing of the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad, 1853–1855, are found in boxes 57–58, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

19. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 89.

20. *Ibid.*, 84.

21. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 292.

22. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 81; Dilts, *Great Road*, 366–367.

23. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 82.

24. Camden Station is described in Herbert H. Harwood Jr., *Impossible Challenge II: The Odyssean Saga of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Washington and Harpers Ferry from 1828–1994* (Baltimore: Barnard, Roberts, 1994), 77–78, as well as in Herbert Harwood’s correspondence with the author.

25. William Keyser, *Recollections of a Busy Life, 1835–1904*, updated and ed. Louise Bruce (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 2000), 149–150.

26. Alejandra Miranda-Naón (ed.), *America’s Great Road: The Impact of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad on the Baltimore Region* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum Education Department, 1995), 18–19.

27. The Big Four are described in F. W. Stevens, *The Beginnings of the New York Central Railroad* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1926). See also Alvin F. Harlow, *The Road of the Century: The Story of the New York Central* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1947).

28. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 95, appendix 5:379.

29. *Ibid.*, appendix 3:376.

30. *Ibid.*, 95.

31. *Thirty-First Annual Report* (1857), 15, B&O Museum.

32. Documents relating to the Garretts’ financial backing of the Central Ohio Railroad, 1852–1854, can be found in boxes 55–58, Garrett Family Papers, LOC. See also Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 82–84.

33. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 25.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Twenty-Eighth Annual Report* (1854), 22, B&O Museum.

36. *Thirty-Second Annual Report* (1858), 15, B&O Museum.

37. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:316.

38. *Thirty-Second Annual Report* (1858), 18, B&O Museum.

39. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:317.

40. RG&S to Peabody & Co., December 9, 1856, box 64, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

41. William Bruce Catton, “John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874,” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1959, 147–149.

42. *Ibid.*, 151–152.

43. John C. French, *A History of the University Founded by Johns Hopkins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1946), 11.

44. Helen Hopkins Thom, *Johns Hopkins: A Silhouette* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 34.

45. Kelly Dale Terrill, *Reservoir Hill* (Mount Pleasant, SC: Acadia, 2013), 16.
46. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, December 10, 1856, 164–168, B&O Museum.
47. For more information on the American Central Route, see Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 82–88; Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:289–315.
48. JWG letters to family members, June–July 1857, box 63, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
49. EBG to HSG, August 17, 1859; EBG to HSG, August 19, 1859, box 70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
50. Samuel M. Felton to HSG, May 14, 1857, box 65, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
51. *Baltimore Sun*, February 5, 1857.
52. J. H. Sullivan to HSG and JWG, February 10, 1857, box 64, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
53. 1860 Baltimore City census, 11th Ward, 98, MHS.
54. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:328.

Chapter 5 • The Personification of Firmness

1. Helen Hopkins Thom, *Johns Hopkins: A Silhouette* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 45.
2. *Baltimore Sun*, November 18, 1858.
3. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland, Being a History of Frederick, Montgomery, Carroll, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1882), 2:1511.
4. *Baltimore Sun*, November 18, 1858.
5. Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, 2:1520.
6. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 1:330.
7. *Ibid.*, 1:334.
8. Charles Moran to JWG, November 20, 1858, box 68, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
9. JWG to Charles Moran, November 26, 1858, box 68, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
10. JWG to HSG, August 25, 1858, box 68, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
11. William Bruce Catton, "How Rails Saved a Seaport," *American Heritage* 8, no. 2 (February 1957), www.americanheritage.com/content/how-rails-saved-seaport/.
12. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:317.
13. Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 90. Comparisons are also mentioned in T. J. Stiles, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 403.
14. William Bruce Catton, "John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874," PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1959, 204.
15. Albert J. Churella, *Building an Empire*, vol. 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 109.
16. "Laws of Railroadings," courtesy of Herbert H. Harwood Jr., in correspondence with the author.

17. John E. Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War: The Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2001), 48.
18. All data are from the *Thirty-Second Annual Report* (1858), B&O Museum.
19. "In Memory of John Work Garrett: Sketch of John W. Garrett," folder F1, MEG Collection, BMC.
20. Catton, "John W. Garrett," 145.
21. "Bylaws of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad," B&O Museum.
22. JWG to Henry Tyson, November 27, 1858, box 68; JWG to Henry Tyson, January 5, 1859, box 69; and JWG to Henry Tyson, May 26, 1859, box 69, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
23. Catton, "How Rails Saved a Seaport."
24. JWG to Henry Tyson, September 13, 1859, box 70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
25. Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War*, 13.
26. Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 120.
27. *Ibid.*, 8.
28. *Ibid.*, 98.
29. *Organization of the Services of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, 1847, B&O Museum.
30. Chandler, *Visible Hand*, 101.
31. *Organization of the Services*, B&O Museum.
32. Roger Pickenpauh, *Rescue by Rail: Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 12–13.
33. Chandler, *Railroads*, 98.
34. Chandler, *Visible Hand*, 101.
35. Elizabeth Schaaf, "George Peabody: His Life and Legacy, 1795–1869," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 90, no. 3 (Fall 1995), 275.
36. Catton, "How Rails Saved a Seaport."
37. David Shackelford, *A Journey from Roads to Rails: The Baltimore & Frederick Turnpike, the B&O Railroad, and Ellicotts Mills, Maryland, 1800–1860* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum, 2010), 40–41.
38. JWG to Henry Tyson, July 11, 1859, box 70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
39. *Baltimore Sun*, September 27, 1884.
40. August Mencken, *The Railroad Passenger Car: An Illustrated History of the First Hundred Years, with Accounts by Contemporary Passengers* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957), 121.
41. Shackelford, *Journey from Roads to Rails*, 38.
42. JWG to William Prescott Smith, August 17, 1859, box 70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
43. *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1860), 15, B&O Museum.
44. Herbert H. Harwood Jr., *Impossible Challenge II: The Odyssean Saga of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Washington and Harpers Ferry from 1828–1994* (Baltimore: Barnard, Roberts, 1994), 83.
45. Catton, "How Rails Saved a Seaport."
46. *Ibid.*
47. F. R. Reynolds to JWG, March 11, 1861, box 72, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
48. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 41.

49. *Ibid.*, 12.
50. *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1860), 14, B&O Museum.
51. *Ibid.*, 26.
52. Catton, “John W. Garrett,” 189.
53. *Ibid.*, 42.
54. John Kettlewell to JWG, September 15, 1860, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
55. John S. Cunningham to JWG, November 20, 1860, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
56. *Thirty-Fourth Annual Report* (1860), 38, B&O Museum.
57. John Moody, *The Railroad Builders: A Chronicle of the Welding of the States* (New York: United States Publishers Association, 1919), 101–102.

Chapter 6 • Railroad Competition and Cooperation—and Political Division

1. William Bruce Catton, “John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874,” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1959, 202.
2. *Ibid.*, 209–210. Catton provides examples of the complex process of calculating rates among cooperating railroads. First, freight had to be categorized, a daunting task, considering the hundreds of kinds of freight that traveled the rails, from tons of coal and individual mail parcels to pianos and practically every known breed of livestock. It was decided that all freight would be categorized according to value and bulk. Then, rates between the point of shipment and the final destination had to be determined. The most sensible way to approach this problem was to compute charges from the same point of shipment in the hinterlands to the major East Coast ports of New York City, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. But, between the point of origin and the point of destination, freight usually traveled over several smaller, independent railroads, complicating the process. Thus prorating expenses to these smaller lines had to be factored into the pricing formula. A typical shipment from Cincinnati to New York City in the late 1850s shows the convoluted calculations required to quote a shipping rate. If shipped on the New York Central, the freight from Cincinnati would travel 880 miles over eight railroads; on the Erie, 850 miles on eight lines; by way of the Pennsylvania, six railroads and 800 miles; or five railroads and 780 miles on the B&O. Thrown into the chaotic calculations were the costs that had to be paid to each railroad along the way, depending on the length of that particular leg of the trip. On the Cincinnati to New York City route, for example, the division would be 3/44ths, 3/44ths, 7/44ths, 5/44ths, 1/44th, 3/44ths, 15/44ths (the New York Central’s share), and 7/44ths. Railroad cars that sat idle drained the company’s coffers, and it was not unusual for trains to carry freight at a loss, rather than not moving it at all.
3. The meetings are noted in James A. Ward, *J. Edgar Thomson: Master of the Pennsylvania* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 119. Examples can also be found in issues of the *American Railroad Journal*, December 23, 1854–November 27, 1858; boxes 69–71, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
4. Alfred D. Chandler Jr., *The Railroads: The Nation’s First Big Business* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 10.
5. For example, JWG to J. Edgar Thomas, February 21, 1859, box 69, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

6. William Keyser, *Recollections of a Busy Life, 1835–1904*, updated and ed. Louise Bruce (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 2000), 157.

7. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 22.

8. JWG to Speaker, Maryland House of Delegates, January 24, 1860, in *Testimony Taken Before a Special Committee of the House of Delegates of Maryland to Inquire into the Alleged Discrimination Against Citizens of Maryland by the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, under an Order Passed on 23 January 1860*, box 70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

9. Evidence of railroad passes can be seen in various letters, boxes 69–70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

10. Thomson to Erastus Corning, October, 5, 1858, box 68, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

11. *American Railroad Journal* 30 (July 17, 1858), 456.

12. Ward, *J. Edgar Thomson*, 7.

13. *Ibid.*, 12.

14. Albert J. Churella, *Building an Empire*, vol. 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 111–114; Catton, “John W. Garrett,” 238, 445; James A. Ward, “J. Edgar Thomson,” in *Railroads in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Robert L. Frey, *Encyclopedia of American Business History and Biography* (New York: Bruccoli Clark Layman and Facts on File, 1988), 384–390. For a full biography of Thomson, see Ward, *J. Edgar Thomson*.

15. Ward, *J. Edgar Thomson*, 6.

16. Correspondence between Thomson and Garrett regarding rates from 1856 to 1859 can be found in boxes 64–70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

17. Thomson to JWG, August 3, 1857, box 66, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

18. JWG to Thomson, July 11, 1859, box 70, Garrett Family Paper, LOC.

19. Thomson to JWG, March 5, 1857, box 66, Garrett Family Paper, LOC.

20. JWG to Thomson, February 21, 1859, box 69, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

21. Thomson to JWG, August 23, 1859, box 70, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

22. Churella, *Pennsylvania Railroad*, 243; Catton, “John W. Garrett,” 238.

23. Brantz Mayer, *Baltimore: Past and Present, with Biographical Sketches of Its Representative Men* (Baltimore: Richardson & Bennett, 1871), 280.

24. Churella, *Pennsylvania Railroad*, 239.

25. *New York Times*, May 22, 1881.

26. Churella, *Pennsylvania Railroad*, 207.

27. *Ibid.*, 207–209; Catton, “John W. Garrett,” 445; James A. Ward, “J. Edgar Thomson and Thomas A. Scott: A Symbiotic Relationship?,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 50 (1976), 37–65.

28. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 1:336.

29. *Ibid.*, 1:338.

30. “Virginia Slave Population Map, 1860,” Education@Library of Virginia, edu.lva.virginia.gov/online_classroom/shaping_the_constitution/doc/slavemap/.

31. This information courtesy of Courtney B. Wilson, in correspondence with the author.

32. Daniel Carroll Toomey, *The War Came by Train: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad during the Civil War* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum, 2013), 9.

33. JWG to Gov. Henry A. Wise, November 10, 1859, box 68; and JWG to William Prescott Smith, November 29, 1859, box 68, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
34. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:344.
35. Daniel Carroll Toomey lecture, “The War Came by Train,” presented at the B&O Museum, October 20, 2011.
36. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:339.
37. Ibid.
38. Joseph Sturge, *A Visit to the United States in 1841* (London: Hamilton, Adams, 1842), 30.
39. 1860 federal census, box 1-4, folder 6-4, MEG Collection, BMC.
40. Toomey, “The War Came by Train.”
41. John Pendleton Kennedy, *The Border States: Their Power and Duty in the Present Disordered Condition of the Country* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1861), 4.
42. Anthony Trollope, vol. 1 in *North America*, 2 vols. (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1863), quoted in William C. Chase (ed.), “Descriptions of Maryland: A Miscellany,” revised 2002, www2.mcdaniel.edu/History/miscellany.html.
43. David Shackelford, *A Journey from Roads to Rails: The Baltimore & Frederick Turnpike, the B&O Railroad, and Ellicotts Mills, Maryland, 1800–1860* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum, 2010), 41.
44. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:347.

Chapter 7 • In the Thick of the Struggle

1. JWG to HSG, April 19, 1851, box 53, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
2. HSG to Erastus Corning, June 6, 1860, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
3. Evidence of Garrett’s disillusionment with Polk and the Mexican War can be found in boxes 44 and 45, January 1848–May 1848, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
4. Ele Bowen, *Rambles in the Path of the Steam-Horse* (Philadelphia: Wm. Bromwell & Wm. White Smith, 1855), 321.
5. *Richmond Daily Enquirer*, February 28, 1860.
6. *Wheeling Intelligencer*, October 15, 1887.
7. Herbert H. Harwood Jr., *Impossible Challenge II: The Odyssean Saga of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Washington and Harpers Ferry from 1828–1994* (Baltimore: Barnard, Roberts, 1994), 94.
8. *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, January 26, 1861.
9. *Railroad Record*, May 2, 1861, 125–126.
10. *Baltimore Sun*, February 7, 1861.
11. William Bruce Catton, “John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874,” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1959, 266.
12. *Charleston [SC] Mercury*, December 20, 1860.
13. HSG to [name unclear], March 5, 1861, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
14. HSG to Wilbur & Price, New York, December 29, 1860, box 71, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
15. Daniel Carroll Toomey, *The War Came by Train: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad during the Civil War* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum, 2013), 131.

16. David Zax, "Anticipation: June 1861," *Smithsonian Magazine* (June 2011), 18.
17. *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 20, 1861.
18. Thomas Weber, *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861–1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 5.
19. Industrial and demographic statistics are cited from Robert A. Divine, T. H. Breen, George M. Fredrickson, R. Hal Williams, Ariela J. Gross, and H. W. Brands, *Vol. 1: To 1877*, in *America Past & Present*, 2 vols., 8th ed. (New York: Pearson Longman, 2007), 427.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. George T. Ness Jr., *The Regular Army on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Toomey Press, 1990), 251.
23. Gary B. Nash, Julia Roy Jeffrey, John R. Howe, Allen F. Davis, Peter Frederick, and Alan M. Winkler (eds.), *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society*, 2 vols., 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1998), 1:506.
24. Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958), 138.
25. John Lovell Cunningham, *Three Years with the Adirondack Regiment: 118th New York Volunteers Infantry* (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1920), 64.
26. James C. Bonner, "Problems of Logistics in the Confederacy," Springfield Armory Museum, <http://ww2.rediscov.com/spring/VFPCGI.exe?IDCFile=/spring/DETAILS.IDC,SPECIFIC=14775,DATABASE=objects/>.
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28. Described in "A Tale of Two Presidents," *New York Times*, February 20, 2011.
29. Daniel Strashower, "Lincoln Must Die!" *Smithsonian Magazine* (February 2013), 81.
30. Daniel Toomey lecture, "The War Came by Train," presented at the B&O Museum, October 20, 2011.
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33. *Wheeling Intelligencer*, April 22, 1861.
34. JWG to Hugh Jewett, April 16, 1861, box 72, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
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37. Robert I. Cottom Jr. and Mary Ellen Hayward, *Maryland in the Civil War: A House Divided* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1994), 32.
38. "In Memory of John Work Garrett: Sketch of John W. Garrett," 5, folder Fr, MEG Collection, BMC.
39. William E. Bain (ed.), *B&O in the Civil War: From the Papers of William Prescott Smith* (Denver: Sage Books, 1960), 12.
40. Cottom and Hayward, *Maryland in the Civil War*, 30.
41. J. David Hacker, a demographic historian from Binghamton University in New York State, has recalculated the death toll of the Civil War, with estimates now 20 percent higher

than previously thought: 750,000, a figure gaining credibility among historians. See “New Estimate Raises Civil War Death Toll,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2012.

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44. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidereith & Sons, 1965), 39.
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48. MEG memoir.
49. “Mr. Johns Hopkins,” *Johns Hopkins Magazine* 25, no. 1 (January 1974), 13.
50. Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 216–217, 248, 287–288, 290–293, 313.
51. Festus P. Summers, *The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War* (Gettysburg: Stan Clark Military Books, reprint 1992; originally published 1939), 58.
52. Sir William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (Boston: T. O. H. P. Burnham, 1863) 45.
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54. HSG to Elizabeth Garrett, August 6, 1862, box 73, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
55. Ward Hill Lamon, *Recollections of Abraham Lincoln, 1847–1865* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1911) 132.
56. MEG memoir.
57. Russell, *My Diary*, 55.
58. *Baltimore Sun*, May 24, 1862.
59. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 31.
60. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 1:350.
61. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland, Being a History of Frederick, Montgomery, Carroll, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1882), 2:1513.
62. *Baltimore Sun*, September 26, 1884.
63. HSG funeral address, 1867, box 18, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
64. Ibid.
65. James R. Power to HSG, June 25, 1851, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
66. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 46.
67. HSG to Peabody & Co., April 15, 1861, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
68. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 43.
69. Francis F. Beirne, *The Amiable Baltimoreans* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1951), 30. The Maryland Club met with an ignoble end to its secessionist activities. In November 1864, General Lew Wallace converted the former hotbed of secessionists into a charity for former slaves, “Freedom’s Nest.” It lasted for two months, until Lincoln ordered it to be closed. See Robert J. Brugger, *The Maryland Club: A History of Food and Friendship, 1857–1997* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 28–29.

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71. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 43.
72. Ibid., 44–45.
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75. [Name illegible] to JWG, April 26, 1861, box 2, JWG Collection, NMAH.
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77. Ibid.
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80. James Robertson, *The Untold Civil War: Exploring the Human Side of War* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2011), 83.
81. Nash et al., *American People*, 1:506.
82. Robertson, *Untold Civil War*, 170.
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85. John E. Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War: The Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2001), 37.
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89. Weber, *Northern Railroads*, 78.
90. Ibid., 77.
91. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 62.
92. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, December 18, 1861, B&O Museum.
93. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, May 1, 1862, B&O Museum.
94. JWG to Edwin Stanton, October 18, 1863, box 74, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
95. MEG memoir.

Chapter 8 • A Southern Line No More

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2. Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 410–412.
3. JWG to Thomas Donaldson, January 23, 1862, box 73, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
4. William E. Bain (ed.), *B&O in the Civil War: From the Papers of William Prescott Smith* (Denver: Sage Books, 1960), 12.
5. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, February 12, 1862, B&O Museum.
6. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, October 1, 1862, B&O Museum.
7. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 1:351.
8. JWG to Thomas Donaldson, January 23, 1862, box 73, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
9. JWG to Stanton, May 18, 1862, box 73, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

10. Horace P. Batcheler, *Jonathon at Home* (London: H. W. Collingridge, 1864), 178.
11. Roger Pickenpaugh, *Rescue by Rail: Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 86.
12. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 112.
13. Thomas Weber, *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861–1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 222.
14. JWG to T. N. Heskett, March 1, 1862; JWG to General McClellan, March 6, 1862; JWG to William C. Quincy, March, 19, 1862; and JWG to Stanton, March 24, 1862, box 73, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
15. JWG to Thatcher Perkins, March 28, 1862, box 73, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
16. Robert C. Black III, *The Railroads of the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 2.
17. Robert R. Hodges, *American Civil War Railroad Tactics* (New York: Osprey, 2009), 5. The total number of 300 included railroads of all sizes and gauges.
18. Gary B. Nash, Julia Roy Jeffrey, John R. Howe, Allen F. Davis, Peter Frederick, and Alan M. Winkler (eds.), *The American People: Creating a Nation and a Society*, 2 vols., 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1998), 1:508.
19. James Robertson, *The Untold Civil War: Exploring the Human Side of War* (Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2011), 194.
20. Black, *Railroads of the Confederacy*, 12.
21. *Ibid.*, 4–5.
22. *Ibid.*, xi.
23. “Railroads of the Confederacy,” Civil War Trust, www.civilwar.org/education/history/warfare-and-logistics/logistics/railroads.html.
24. Black, *Railroads of the Confederacy*, 113.
25. The instructions stated that no military officers were to interfere in the running of trains; supplies would be sent forward only as needed; trains reaching the front were to be unloaded immediately by anyone available; officers who refused to cooperate faced dismissal; where telegraph communications were unavailable, trains would run according to a rigid schedule; all trains would depart on schedule, fully loaded or not, and extra trains would pick up the slack; on rail lines where the absence of sidings prevented opposing trains from passing each other, convoys of five or six trains would travel as a group; each convoy would deliver its cargo and return to base before the next convoy started out. See http://learningabe.info/Military_Railroad.html.
26. Robert V. Bruce, *Lincoln and the Tools of War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 215; Haupt to Stanton, May 25, 1862, in Herman Haupt, *Reminiscences of General Herman Haupt, giving Hitherto Unpublished Official orders, Personal Narratives of Important Military Operations, and Interviews with President Lincoln, Secretary Stanton, General-in-Chief Halleck, and with Generals McDowell, McClellan, Meade, Hancock, Burnside, and Others in Command of the Armies in the Field, and His Impressions of These Men* (Milwaukee: Wright & Joys, 1901), 46.
27. Christopher R. Gabel, *Railroad Generalship: Foundations of Civil War Strategy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1997), 22.

28. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 115.
29. Clayton Coleman Hall (ed.), *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, 2 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical, 1912), 2:457–458.
30. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidereith & Sons, 1965), 46.
31. *Ibid.*, 39.
32. Clement Vallandigham to HSG, January 1, 1863; HSG to Vallandigham, January 3, 1863, box 3, RG&S Papers, MS 2089, MHS.
33. Draft notice to George Carp, October 25, 1862, box 36, file 568-1, B&O Museum.
34. JWG to the Office of Assistant Adjutant General and Superintendent of Enrollment, October 24, 1862, box 36, file 568-1, B&O Museum. Files 568-1 and 568-2 contain several examples of requests for draft deferments.
35. HSG to JWG, July 21, 1863, box 29, folder 473, B&O Museum. The imprisoned B&O employees—T. D. Armstrong, John Coleman, William White, William Brown, P. M. Jeffreys, A. C. Coleman, Thomas Hill, Henry Parker, James Crone, and John Roney—are listed in the *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report* (1864), 45, B&O Museum.
36. *New York Herald*, “The Richmond Prisoners,” November 28, 1863. In 1864, war prisoners were moved to Macon, Georgia. B&O records do not indicate the release of B&O prisoners from Libby Prison.
37. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 45.
38. Correspondence between Henry Garrett and James Buchanan can be found in boxes 67–76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
39. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 34.
40. HSG to J. Pierpont Morgan, June, 2, 1863; J. Pierpont Morgan to HSG and JWG, November 25, 1863, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
41. HSG to Peabody, October 22, 1863, box 3, RG&S Papers, MS 2089, MHS.
42. William C. Davis, *A Concise History of the Civil War*, Civil War Series (Conshohocken, PA: Eastern National Park and Monument Association, 1994), 10. Statistics include those killed, wounded, or missing.
43. Hospital notebook: *At Antietam, Revising Himself: Walt Whitman and Leaves of Grass*, Library of Congress American Treasures Exhibition, www.loc.gov/exhibits/treasures/ww0024a-trans.html. Colonel George Washington Whitman survived Antietam and served honorably through the remainder of the war. He died in 1901, nine years after his famous brother.
44. Burt Kummerow, “The Season of Antietam,” *Maryland Historical Society News* (Fall 2012), 23.
45. *Ibid.*
46. JWG to McClellan, October 24, 1862, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
47. *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1863), 42, B&O Museum.
48. Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 58–59.
49. Daniel Carroll Toomey, *The War Came by Train: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad during the Civil War* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum, 2013), 134.
50. *Ibid.*, 135.
51. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, November, 7, 1863, B&O Museum.
52. Toomey, *War Came By Train*, 136.

53. George M. Frederickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), 72.
54. *Ibid.*, 57.
55. “1863: Turning Point of the Civil War,” *National Geographic* Supplement (May 2012).
56. MEG memoir.
57. JWG to George B. McClellan, October 24, 1862, box 74, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
58. Gabel, *Railroad Generalship*, 20–21.
59. Documents relating to Gettysburg troop and supply movements are contained in folder 4292.2, B&O Museum.
60. Armored cars are described in Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 177.
61. John Rodgers Meigs was killed in a Confederate ambush near Harrisonburg, Virginia, on October 3, 1864. He was 22 years old.
62. Greg Botelho, “Clash Comes to Symbolize Civil War,” June 28, 2004, CNN.com, www.cnn.com/2004/US/06/25/gettysburg/.
63. Bain, *B&O in the Civil War*, 12.
64. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 176.
65. JWG to General Halleck, July 9, 1863, box 74, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
66. Festus P. Summers, *The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War* (Gettysburg: Stan Clark Military Books, reprint 1992; originally published 1939), 122.
67. RG II to HSG, August 21, 1864, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
68. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 25.
69. Stanton to JWG, July 5, 1863, box 72, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
70. *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1863), B&O Museum.
71. JWG to Edwin Stanton, October 15, 1863; Edwin Stanton to JWG October 15, 1863, box 29, file 473, B&O Museum.
72. JWG to William Prescott Smith, November 18, 1863, box 29, file 473, Garrett Papers, B&O Museum.
73. “The Civil War at 150,” *Washington Post*, September 15, 2013.
74. Correspondence, Stanton to JWG, November 18, 1863, *The Lincoln Log: A Daily Chronology of the Life of Abraham Lincoln*, www.thelincolnlog.org.
75. Stanton to JWG, July 5, 1863, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
76. Edwin Stanton to General Edward Otho Cresap Ord, July 12, 1864, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
77. *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report* (1863), 31, B&O Museum.
78. *New York Times*, October 3, 1863.

Chapter 9 • The Right Arm of the Federal Government

1. Daniel Carroll Toomey, *The War Came by Train: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad during the Civil War* (Baltimore: B&O Railroad Museum, 2013), 179–180.
2. Edwin M. Stanton to JWG, September 23, 1863, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
3. JWG to Edwin M. Stanton, September 24, 1863, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
4. Festus P. Summers, *The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War* (Gettysburg: Stan Clark Military Books, reprint 1992; originally published 1939), 167.

5. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 179.
6. JWG to Louis M. Cole, October 6, 1863, box 55, folder 5174, B&O Museum.
7. William Bruce Catton, "John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874," PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1959, 344.
8. JWG to Thomas A. Scott, September 28, 1863, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
9. JWG to Stanton, September 25, 1863, box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
10. Soldiers' anecdotes are compiled from David Mouat, "Three Years in the Twenty-Ninth Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–1864," unpublished reminiscences, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
11. Roger Pickenpau, *Rescue by Rail: Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 93.
12. JWG to Stanton, October 4, 1863, box 74, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
13. Robert E. Lee to Jefferson Davis, September 28, 1863, in *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: General Printing Office, 1887), ser. 1, vol. 29, pt. 2, 769, 753–754.
14. *Ibid.*, 756.
15. "The War in the West," *Washington Post*, September 15, 2013.
16. From the correspondence of D. F. Boyd and William Tecumseh Sherman, quoted in Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958), 138.
17. "How Rails Saved the Union," *New York Times*, November 15, 2013.
18. Thomas Weber, *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861–1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1952), 187.
19. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 675. Additional correspondence among Garrett and US Army officers involved in the troop movement are found in box 75, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
20. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 208.
21. William Prescott Smith to JWG, August 3, 1863, box 83, folder 7046, B&O Museum.
22. JWG to Stanton, July 7, 1864, box 83, folder 7046, B&O Museum.
23. *Ibid.*
24. JWG to Wallace, July 7, 1864, box 83, file 7046, B&O Museum.
25. Toomey, *War Came By Train*, 204.
26. Monocacy National Battlefield Staff, *The Battle of Monocacy* ([MD]: Western Maryland Interpretive Association, 2010), 23.
27. National Park Service, *Monocacy: National Battlefield, Maryland*, US Department of the Interior pamphlet.
28. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 202.
29. Robert W. Schoeberlein, "A Fair to Remember," *Maryland Historical Society Magazine* 90, no. 4 (Winter 1995), 481.
30. *Baltimore American*, April 20, 1864.
31. Schoeberlein, "A Fair to Remember," 481.
32. Ronald C. White Jr., "Absence of Malice," *Smithsonian Magazine* 33, no. 1 (April 2002); "Death and the Civil War," *American Experience* series, PBS, 2012.
33. Edwin Stanton to JWG, April 18, 1865, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
34. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 189–190.

35. Scott Sumpter Sheads and Daniel Carroll Toomey, *Baltimore during the Civil War* (Baltimore: Toomey Press, 1997) 80.
36. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 2:61.
37. *Baltimore Sun*, April 22, 1865.
38. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 2:61.
39. Edwin M. Stanton to Winfield Scott Hancock, March 2, 1865, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
40. Interview in J. H. Hummel, *The Early Life, Campaigns, and Services of Robert E. Lee* (New York: E. B. Treat, 1870), 170–180.
41. "Sketch of John W. Garrett," [no date], JWG Collection, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University, 8.
42. John Woolley to JWG, April 25, 1865, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC. Evidence of other requests can be found in box 76.
43. Andrew Johnson to JWG, July 11, 1866, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
44. Andrew Johnson to JWG, September 28, 1866, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
45. Joan E. Cashin, *First Lady of the Confederacy: Varina Davis's Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 167.
46. Thomas Scharf's interview with John Garrett, conducted on May 21, 1882, at the Southern Hotel in St. Louis, can be found in box 87, Garrett Family Papers, LOC. Garrett's involvement in the release of Davis is also documented in a letter Thomas Scharf sent to Garrett's son, T. Harrison Garrett, on May 8, 1886.
47. William J. Cooper Jr., *Jefferson Davis: American* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000). Cooper corroborates Garrett's role in Davis' release: "Davis' side scored a major triumph when, with the influential encouragement of John W. Garrett, Secretary of War Stanton decided not to impose a writ" (564), which would have required a court to hear the request.
48. Horace Henry Hager, "United States vs. Jefferson Davis," *Sewanee Review* 25, no. 2 (April 1917), 220.
49. Cashin, *First Lady of the Confederacy*, 215.
50. *Baltimore Sun*, June 14, 1886.
51. "The Ladies of Baltimore" to Grover Cleveland, box 87, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
52. Toomey, *War Came by Train*, 242.
53. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 2:135.
54. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidereith & Sons, 1965), 43.
55. *Ibid.*, 42.
56. Frank Abial Flower, *Edwin Masters Stanton: The Autocrat of Rebellion, Emancipation, and Reconstruction* (New York: Saalfeld, 1905), 356.
57. *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1865), 21, B&O Museum.
58. *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report* (1861), 24, through *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1865), 44, B&O Museum.
59. Catton, "John W. Garrett," 363.
60. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 117.
61. *Thirty-Ninth Annual Report* (1865), 21, B&O Museum.

62. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 2:64.
63. For the Main Stem, see Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 116; for the Washington Branch, see Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 2:65.
64. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 129.
65. William Keyser, *Recollections of a Busy Life, 1835–1904*, updated and ed. Louise Bruce (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 2000), 211.
66. *Baltimore Sun*, September 23, 1866.
67. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 29.
68. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, December 12, 1865, B&O Museum.
69. Keyser, *Recollections*, 227.
70. Clayton Coleman Hall (ed.), *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, 2 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical, 1912), 2:452.
71. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 2:63–64.

Chapter 10 • A New World Order

1. *New York Times*, July 16, 1868.
2. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 120.
3. JWG to Thomson, June 24, 1865, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
4. Such letters can be found in box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC, and JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
5. JWG to Brigham Young, July 5, 1867, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
6. JWG to C. M. Lampear, June 29, 1867; JWG to C. M. Lampear, September 14, 1867, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
7. JWG to Master of Transportation, May 30, 1867, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
8. JWG to U. S. Grant, January 15, 1870, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
9. There is no correspondence confirming the presentation of the china from Grant to Garrett, but the Garrett family's oral history indicates that the dining service most likely was presented during Grant's first term, perhaps around 1870. The style and colors suggest early postwar designs. Pieces of the dining service are on exhibit at the Evergreen Museum & Library in Baltimore. This information courtesy of James A. Abbott, director and curator, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.
10. JWG to Master of Transportation, February 9, 1869, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
11. JWG to H. R. Claflin & Co. of New York, May 30, 1868, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
12. JWG to President, Central Ohio Division, June 2, 1867, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
13. HSG to unknown recipient, March 9, 1867, box 17, Garrett Papers. MS 979, MHS.
14. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidreith & Sons, 1965), 45.
15. HSG to Elizabeth Garrett, September 8, 1866, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

16. Elizabeth Garrett to JWG, July 29, 1856, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
17. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 46.
18. HSG to Elizabeth Garrett, September 8, 1866, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
19. JWG to HSG, August 12, 1867, box 3, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
20. Letters of condolence to JWG, boxes 76–77, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
21. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 47.
22. “Services and Address at the Funeral of the Late Henry S. Garrett,” October 12, 1867, 18, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
23. Ibid., 10.
24. RG II to Rachel Garrett, February 8, 1865, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
25. RG II to HSG, September 28, 1866, box 76, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
26. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons*, 48. Princeton later awarded T. Harrison Garrett a master of arts degree.
27. Ibid.
28. JWG to William Keyser, August 8, 1872, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
29. Keyser, *Recollections*, 149–150.
30. Ibid., 159.
31. Described in Gabor Boritt, *The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech that Nobody Knows* (New York: Simon & Shuster), 51.
32. *New York Times*, October 17, 1880.
33. *New York Sun*, November 28, 1870.
34. *New York Times*, October 17, 1880.
35. T. J. Stiles, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009) 553.
36. Albert J. Churella, *Building an Empire*, vol. 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 326–327, 474.
37. Ibid., ix.
38. Ibid., ix, 435.
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56. *Ibid.*
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60. James A. Ward, *J. Edgar Thomson: Master of the Pennsylvania* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 154.
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63. Catton, “John W. Garrett,” 423.
64. Herbert H. Harwood Jr., in correspondence with the author.
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55. Evidence of Mary's handwriting in her father's correspondence during the 1873–1874 trip is found throughout the Garrett Family Papers, LOC, and in the MEG Papers, BMC.

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69. Keyser, *Recollections*, 225.

70. John W. Garrett, *Catalogue of Trotting Stock* (Baltimore: Press of Isaac Feldman, 1884), Maryland Ephemera Collection, MDXEPS, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore.

71. John King Jr. to JWG, January 1, 1874, box 24, file 342.2, MS 2003, B&O Museum.

72. Keyser, *Recollections*, 169.

73. Unidentified newspaper clipping, Garrett Papers, box 79, file 5174, MS 2003, B&O Museum.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Keyser, *Recollections*, 168.

76. *Sixty-First Annual Report* (1888), 38, B&O Museum.

77. Keyser, *Recollections*, 167.

78. RGS to Peabody & Co., December 9, 1856, box 64, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

79. Keyser, *Recollections*, 167.

80. *Ibid.*

81. Winchester, *Graphic Sketches*, 110.

82. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 141.

83. *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1874), 6, B&O Museum.

84. Keyser, *Recollections*, 186.

85. *Forty-Eighth Annual Report* (1874), 5, B&O Museum.
86. *Forty-Ninth Annual Report* (1875), 6–7, B&O Museum.
87. Keyser, *Recollections*, 167.
88. James A. Ward, *J. Edgar Thomson: Master of the Pennsylvania* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980), 215.
89. John King Jr. to JWG, July 16, 1874, box 62, file 3096, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
90. For details, see Albert J. Churella, *Building an Empire*, vol. 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 472–476; George C. Burgess and Miles C. Kennedy, *Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Railroad, 1949), 314–335.
91. Keyser, *Recollections*, 173.
92. Quoted in T. J. Stiles, *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 553.
93. In the early 1880s, Garrett finally found the opportunity to open a more direct route to Chicago from Pittsburgh, where he had inexplicably stopped in 1871. But by that time, the B&O was the latecomer to the big midwestern gateway city on Lake Michigan, with the best routes into the city already well established by the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad.
94. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 152.
95. JWG to RG II, March 15, 1878, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
96. *Fiftieth Annual Report* (1876), 22, B&O Museum.
97. Herbert H. Harwood Jr., *Impossible Challenge II: The Odyssean Saga of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Washington and Harpers Ferry from 1828–1994* (Baltimore: Barnard, Roberts, 1994), 25.
98. Keyser, *Recollections*, 175.
99. *New York Evening Post*, November 18, 1874.
100. Keyser, *Recollections*, 173.
101. For more information about the B&O's founding of Garrett, Indiana, see Garrett Historical Society, <http://thegarrethistoricalsociety.weebly.com/garrett-history.html>.
102. *Fiftieth Annual Report* (1876), 19, B&O Museum.
103. Keyser, *Recollections*, 228.
104. *Baltimore American*, September 27, 1884.
105. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 130.
106. Keyser, *Recollections*, 177.
107. Miscellaneous document, July 6, 1872, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
108. "New York and the Panic of 1873," *New York Times*, October 14, 2008.
109. Keyser, *Recollections*, 189.
110. Fee et al., *Baltimore Book*, 1.
111. Miscellaneous document, July 6, 1872, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
112. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, July 11, 1877, B&O Museum.
113. Quoted in Frederick L. Paxson, *Recent History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1921), 20.
114. *Railroad Gazette* (August 31, 1877), 399–400.
115. Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!*, revised and updated ed. (Oakland, CA: P. M. Press, 2014), 21.
116. Fee et al., *Baltimore Book*, 6.

117. JWG to Rutherford B. Hayes, July 17, 1877, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 1, MS 2719, MHS.
118. JWG to George W. McCrary, July 18, 1877, Garrett Papers, box 14, file 197.2, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
119. JWG to E. P. Fabbri, August 8, 1877, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
120. EBG to Mary A. Snyder, November 22, 1877, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
121. Quoted in Fee et al., *Baltimore Book*, 9.
122. John King Jr. to JWG, July 22, 1877, Garrett Papers, box 14, file 197.2, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
123. *Baltimore Sun*, July 21, 1877.
124. Quoted in Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!*, 20.
125. Keyser, *Recollections*, 191.
126. *Railroad Gazette* (July 30, 1877), 231.
127. *Railroad Gazette* (August 31, 1877), 399–400.
128. John King Jr. to JWG, July 23, 1877, box 14, file 197.4, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
129. *Baltimore Evening Bulletin*, July 24, 1877.
130. Brecher, *Strike!*, 20.
131. JWG to John King Jr., July 28, 1877, box 14, file 197.3, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
132. Hugh Jewett to JWG, July 21, 1877, box 14, file 197.4, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
133. Compiled from Michael A. Bellesiles, *1877: America's Year of Living Violently* (New York: New Press, 2010), 334.
134. *New York Times*, July 25, 1877.
135. "Great Railroad Strike of 1877."
136. *Ibid.*
137. John King Jr. to JWG, July 22, 1877; John King Jr. to JWG July 23, 1877, Garrett Papers, box 7, file 197, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
138. Keyser, *Recollections*, 197.
139. *Chicago Times*, July 25, 1877.
140. *Nation* (July 26, 1877).
141. Quoted in J. A. Dacus, *Annals of the Great Strikes in the United States: A Reliable History and Graphic Description of the Causes and Thrilling Events of the Labor Strikes and Riots of 1877* (St. Louis: Scammell and Company, 1877), 21–23, 42–43, 98–99. Via *History Is a Weapon*, www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/greatstrikesdacus.html.
142. *Baltimore American*, July 21, 1877.
143. Dacus, *Annals of the Great Strikes*.
144. Quoted in Yearly, "Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Strike."
145. Allan Pinkerton, *Strikes, Communists, Tramps, and Detectives* (London, 1878), 147.
146. *Railroad Gazette*, August 31, 1877, 399–400.
147. Emory R. Johnson, "Railway Departments for the Relief and Insurance of Employees," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 6 (November 1895), 69.
148. Fee et al., *Baltimore Book*, 14.
149. *Fifty-Sixth Annual Report* (1883), 22, B&O Museum.
150. John King Jr. to Thomas Scott, September 1, 1877, Garrett Papers, box 7, file 197.2, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
151. Thomas Scott to JWG, September 7, 1877, Garrett Papers, box 14, file 197.2, MS 2003, B&O Museum.

152. Thomas Scott to JWG, December 24, 1877, Garrett Papers, box 7, file 197.3, MS 2003, B&O Museum.
153. “Great Railroad Strike of 1877.”
154. Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 344.
155. JWG to Semmes and Law, October 27, 1877, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
156. The speeches and scene were described in the *New York Times*, November 9, 1877.

Chapter 14 • His Willpower Remained Unimpaired

1. *New York Times*, June 2, 1881.
2. Described in William Bruce Catton, “How Rails Saved a Seaport,” *American Heritage* 8, no. 2 (February 1957), www.americanheritage.com/content/how-rails-saved-seaport/.
3. JWG to John King Jr., March 6, 1875, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
4. JWG to W. C. Cattell, March 20, 1878, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
5. JWG to MEG, June 15, 1878, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
6. William Keyser, *Recollections of a Busy Life, 1835–1904*, updated and ed. Louise Bruce (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 2000), 231.
7. MEG to Charles F. Mayer, February 13, 1894, box “The Garrett Estate,” folder 1-11, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
8. MEG to M. Carey Thomas, October 24, 1879, microfilm reel 42, M. Carey Thomas Papers, BMC.
9. MEG to Charles F. Mayer, February 13, 1894, box “The Garrett Estate,” folder 1-11, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
10. “Social Questions,” miscellaneous document, box “Mary Garrett Diaries, Etc.,” folder F2, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
11. MEG to Rachel Garrett, June 1882, box 82, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
12. MEG to Rachel Garrett, February 12, 1882, box “Mary Garrett to Her Mother, 1882–1883,” folder F1, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
13. *Ibid.*
14. MEG to Rachel Garrett, February 4, 1882, box “Mary Garrett to Her Mother, 1882–1883,” folder F1, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
15. MEG to Rachel Garrett, April 15, 1882, box “Mary Garrett to Her Mother, 1882–1883,” folder F1, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
16. MEG to Rachel Garrett, February 4, 1882, box “Mary Garrett to Her Mother, 1882–1883,” folder F1, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
17. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 43.
18. JWG to RG II, August 18, 1882, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
19. *New York Times*, July 13, 1881.
20. *New York Times*, March 21, 1897.
21. *New York Times*, July 13, 1881.
22. The turnover of B&O staff is noted in the *Annual Reports* from 1880 to 1882, B&O Museum.

23. *Chicago Daily News*, October 9, 1882.
24. Edward James Heimiller, “Medicean Aspirations in America: The Impact of William H. Vanderbilt’s New York Drawing-Room on American Palace Décor,” master’s thesis, Smithsonian Associates and Corcoran College of Art and Design, 2011, 18.
25. *Baltimore Sun*, July 31, 1896.
26. JWG to Thomas Harrison Garrett, October 12, 1882, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
27. JWG to William Keyser, October 13, 1881, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
28. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 156.
29. *New York Times*, July 13, 1881.
30. *Lectures Delivered to the Employees of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Isaac Friedenwald, 1882), PAM 6828, MHS. Lecturers included Professors Newell Martin, Henry Sewall, William T. Sedgwick, and William K. Brooks of the “Biological Department of Johns Hopkins University.”
31. Keyser, *Recollections*, 228–229.
32. *New York Times*, June 9, 1890.
33. Keyser, *Recollections*, 228.
34. Herbert H. Harwood Jr., *Royal Blue Line: The Classic B&O Train between Washington and New York* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 28–29.
35. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, January 11, 1871, B&O Museum.
36. Albert J. Churella, *Building an Empire*, vol. 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 504.
37. *New York Times*, September 28, 1884.
38. *Ibid.*
39. Herbert H. Harwood Jr., *Impossible Challenge II: The Odyssean Saga of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Washington and Harpers Ferry from 1828–1994* (Baltimore: Barnard, Roberts, 1994), 124.
40. Carlos P. Avery, *E. Francis Baldwin, Architect: The B&O, Baltimore, and Beyond*, (Baltimore: Baltimore Architecture Foundation, 2003), 3.
41. Beyond his structures for the B&O, Baldwin’s creations are almost too numerous to count: public health buildings; banks; clubs; residences; government buildings; and, the favorites of the highly religious architect, churches and convents. Today, eight of Baldwin’s buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places and one is designated as a National Historic Landmark. See Avery, *E. Francis Baldwin*, 130.
42. Harwood, *Impossible Challenge II*, 125.
43. Lawrence Sagle, “Let Us Build a Railroad,” *Valleys of History* 4, no. 1 (Winter 1968), 14.
44. Harwood, *Impossible Challenge II*, 125–130, 288.
45. Quotation by Dianne Newell in Harwood, *Impossible Challenge II*, 125.
46. Avery, *E. Francis Baldwin*, 49, 51.
47. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1928), 2:156.
48. *American Architect and Building News* 12, no. 355 (October 14, 1882), 183.
49. Hungerford, *Story of the Baltimore & Ohio*, 2:159.

50. Avery, *E. Francis Baldwin*, 54.
51. *Railroad Gazette* 28 (August 22, 1884), 322. Today, the Roundhouse and adjacent buildings house the B&O Railroad Museum and offices.
52. The “Thomas Jefferson” was renamed the “Hancock” at the Fair of the Iron Horse in 1927. This information courtesy of Courtney B. Wilson, in correspondence with the author.
53. In 1974, a researcher investigating Pangborn found that “his biographical background is sketchy,” but that Pangborn should be remembered as “a most colorful man with a flair for promotion and the father of the present collections in the B&O Transportation Museum.” For the latter quote, see Virginia Turner to George McCann, June 13, 1874, file 1000.521.2512, Major J. G. Pangborn Collection, B&O Museum.
54. Clayton Coleman Hall (ed.), *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, 2 vols. (New York: Lewis Historical, 1912), 2:213.
55. *Baltimore Sun*, August 16, 1919.
56. *New York Times*, June 8, 1892.
57. *Railroad Gazette* 25 (November 17, 1893), 839.
58. *Baltimore Sun*, August 16, 1919.
59. “Major Pangborn: To Whom the [B&O] Library Offers Posthumous Tribute,” *B&O Magazine* (April 1845), file 1000.521.2512, Major J. G. Pangborn Collection, B&O Museum.
60. J. G. Pangborn, *Picturesque B. and O.: Historical and Descriptive* (Chicago: Knight & Leonard, 1882), 10.
61. *Ibid.*, 142.
62. J. G. Pangborn (compiler), *The New B&O Red Book* (Baltimore: Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1880), 3, MHS.
63. *Chicago Magazine*, December 8, 2011.
64. Pangborn, *New B&O Red Book*. Correspondence from JWG, dated in early 1883, to various individuals can be found in box 83, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

Chapter 15 • Final Battles

1. Draft of a review of *The Physical Papers of Henry Augustus Rowland for the Nation*, Charles S. Peirce Papers, Widener Library Archives, Harvard University.
2. “Last Will and Testament of Johns Hopkins,” July 9, 1870, Hopkins Family Collection, box 1, folder 20, MS 78, Ferdinand Hamburger Archives, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University.
3. *Harvard Magazine* 102, no. 2 (November 12, 1999), 15.
4. “Remarks of Mr. John Garrett, Made Before the Board of Trustees of the Johns Hopkins University at Their Meeting on October 6, 1879,” box 80, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
5. William Keyser, *Recollections of a Busy Life, 1835–1904*, updated and ed. Louise Bruce (Baltimore: Gateway Press, 2000), 227.
6. Helen Hopkins Thom, *Johns Hopkins: A Silhouette* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 60.
7. *Ibid.*, 76.
8. Unidentified newspaper clipping, box 78, file 5174, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.

9. John W. Garrett, *Address Delivered on the 30th of January 1883 Before the Young Men's Christian Association of Baltimore on the Occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary* (Baltimore: New Steam Printing Office, 1883), reprinted in the *Baltimore Sun*, January 31, 1883.
10. *New York Times*, September 25, 1884.
11. F. B. Mayer to JWG, April 16, 1882, box 82, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
12. *Baltimore Sun*, January 31, 1883.
13. Ibid.
14. *Baltimore Sun*, September 26, 1884.
15. *Baltimore American*, October 12, 1883.
16. *Baltimore Sun*, November 17, 1883.
17. Florence Harrison to Rachel Garrett, August 26, 1882, box 82, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
18. Marjorie Luckett (ed.), *Maryland Women* (Baltimore: King Brothers Press, 1942), 123; *New York Tribune*, September 28, 1884.
19. *Baltimore Sun*, December 12, 1883.
20. Miscellaneous document, box 83, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
21. Various letters, dated November 15, 1884, through January 1884, box 83, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
22. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, December 12, 1883, 13, B&O Museum.
23. *New York Times*, August 17, 1884.
24. Keyser, *Recollections*, 225.
25. JWG to RG II, January 30, 1884, box 137, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
26. MEG to M. Carey Thomas, March 18, 1884, microfilm reel 42, M. Carey Thomas Papers, BMC.
27. *Baltimore Sun*, September 28, 1884.
28. *Baltimore American*, September 27, 1884.
29. In 2017, the shortest distance (now via interstate highways) is about seven hundred miles; in 1884, however, railroads traveled a more indirect route.
30. Edward Hungerford, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, 1827–1927*, 2 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 2:157–159.
31. Luckett, *Maryland Women*, 123.
32. Keyser, *Recollections*, 228.
33. *Baltimore Sun*, September 27, 1884.
34. Andrew Carnegie to JWG, September 10, 1884, box 83, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
35. *Baltimore Sun*, September 25, 1884.
36. Maury Klein, *The Life and Legend of Jay Gould* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 251.
37. Joshua D. Wolff, *Western Union and the Creation of the American Corporate Order, 1845–1893* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 233.
38. JWG to Superintendent of Telegraph, February 23, 1877, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
39. *New York Times*, January 29, 1884.
40. *Fifty-Fifth Annual Report* (1882), 18–19, B&O Museum.
41. *New York Times*, September 27, 1884.

42. JWG to Superintendent of Telegraph, July 31, 1876, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
43. Miscellaneous document, JWG Letterbooks, vol. 2, MS 2719, MHS.
44. *Baltimore Sun*, September 25, 1884.
45. MEG to Andrew Anderson, [no date], box 137, Garrett Papers, LOC.
46. *Baltimore Sun*, September 25, 1884.
47. MEG to M. Carey Thomas, September 21, 1884, microfilm reel 42, M. Carey Thomas Papers, BMC.
48. *New York Tribune*, September 28, 1884.
49. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, September 26, 1884, 30, B&O Museum.
50. Stephen Schlosnagle and the Garrett County Bicentennial Committee, *Garrett County: A History of Maryland's Tableland* (Parsons, WV: McClain Printing, 1978), 254.
51. [name illegible] to RG II, September 27, 1884, box 83, Garrett Family Papers, LOC.
52. *Baltimore Sun*, September 29, 1884.
53. *Ibid.*

Chapter 16 • After Garrett

1. Commercial and residential rental properties are listed in “Garrett Estate, Inventories, Assets, and Accounts,” folder 2-J, Mary Garrett Business Papers, BMC.
2. MEG to Charles F. Mayer, February 13, 1894, folder 4F, Mary Garrett Business Papers, BMC.
3. *Baltimore American*, September 27, 1884.
4. *Baltimore American*, September 17, 1884.
5. *Baltimore American*, September 27, 1884; “Garrett Estates, Inventories, Assets, and Accounts,” folder 2-J, Mary Garrett Business Papers, BMC.
6. “John W. Garrett Last Will and Testament,” signed August 6, 1884, box 84, Garrett Family Papers, LOC. The terms read that the heirs were to hold “thirty thousand (30,000) shares of the Common Stock of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company for twenty (20) years after my death. . . . I feel confident that these three large proprietors [his heirs, the city of Baltimore, and the Johns Hopkins Trust] cooperating with others alike interested in the welfare and growth of Baltimore will control the management of the Road in the interests of the City.”
7. *Baltimore Sun*, July 30, 1896.
8. *Baltimore American*, September 27, 1884.
9. “Special Meeting of the Board,” B&O Board of Directors, minute book, September 26, 1884; Johns Hopkins University Board of Trustees, minute book, November 20, 1884, B&O Museum.
10. *Baltimore Sun*, July 30, 1896.
11. John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 64.
12. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 197.
13. *Chicago Tribune*, July 30, 1896.
14. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 167.

15. Ibid.
16. Ibid., 166.
17. *New York Times*, March 21, 1897.
18. *Baltimore American*, July 31, 1896. Jay Gould bought the B&O telegraph system in 1887 and merged it with his company, Western Union.
19. Itinerary noted in MEG memoir.
20. *Baltimore Sun*, July 14, 1888.
21. *Baltimore American*, June 15, 1888; *Baltimore Sun*, June 15, 1888.
22. *Baltimore Sun*, June 15, 1888.
23. William F. Frick to John Cowan, August 4, 1890, box 24, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.
24. MEG to M. Carey Thomas, July 30, 1896, microfilm reel 46, M. Carey Thomas Papers, BMC.
25. *Springfield (IL) Republican News*, [undated], folder 2-J, Mary Garrett Papers, BMC.
26. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 168.
27. *Railroad Gazette* (November 30, 1888), 789.
28. *Sixty-First Annual Report* (1888), 16, B&O Museum.
29. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 20, 1888.
30. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 183.
31. Ibid., 182–183.
32. Reorganization Committee of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, *Report of Stephen Little*, July 1896, Garrett Papers, B&O Museum.
33. *New York Times*, March 1, 1896.
34. “Review of Reorganization Committee of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, *Report of Stephen Little*,” Garrett Papers, B&O Museum.
35. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 186. Stover continues: “The general financial policies and practices of the Baltimore and Ohio in the seventies and eighties were no better and no worse than those of most other railroads across the nation. The general reaction of the news of the receivership was more one of surprise than shocked disapproval.”
36. Joel E. Thomson, “Railroad Investing and the Importance of Financial Accounting Information in 1880s America,” *Accounting Historians Journal* (December 2013), 60. Additional railroad accounting information courtesy of Albert Churella, in correspondence with the author.
37. Thomson, “Railroad Investing,” 62.
38. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio*, 188.
39. *New York Times*, June 9, 1890.
40. *New York Times*, March 19, 1899.
41. In 1961, the Engineering Society of Baltimore purchased the mansion and continues to restore it to its original grandeur. For more information, see “The Engineers Club at the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion,” www.esb.org/Club/Scripts/Home/home.asp.
42. Whiteholme was razed in 1963 by Salve Regina College, for the construction of a new dormitory.
43. Harold A. Williams, *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965* (Baltimore: Press of Schneidreith & Sons, 1965), 70.
44. Ibid., 75–78.

45. For more information, see “Evergreen Museum & Library,” Johns Hopkins University Museums, www.museums.jhu.edu/evergreen.php.
46. *New York Times*, February 24, 1891.
47. MEG to Charles F. Mayer, February 13, 1894, folder 4F, Mary Garrett Business Papers, BMC.
48. Margaret W. Rossiter, *Women Scientists in America: Struggles and Strategies to 1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 47.
49. The Bryn Mawr School relocated from its original site in downtown Baltimore and continues today as one of the nation’s premier schools for girls. For more information, see The Bryn Mawr School, www.brynmawrschool.org/page/.
50. For more information, see Bryn Mawr College, www.brynmawr.edu.
51. For a full biography, see Kathleen Waters Sander, *Mary Elizabeth Garrett: Society and Philanthropy in the Gilded Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008).
52. *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 20, 1888.
53. *Baltimore News*, April 3, 1915.
54. MEG to Charles F. Mayer, February 13, 1894, folder 4F, Mary Garrett Business Papers, BMC.
55. *New York Times*, July 14, 1888.
56. Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes, and Linda Zeidman (eds.), *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991), 27.

Epilogue • Legacy

1. Paul Winchester, *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* (Baltimore: Maryland County Press, 1927), 47.
2. *Philadelphia Press*, September 27, 1884; *Pittsburgh Press*, September 27, 1884; *New York Times*, September 27, 1884; *Washington Post*, September 27, 1884.
3. B&O Board of Directors, minute book, September 26, 1884, 30, B&O Museum.
4. *Baltimore American*, December, 18, 1887.
5. The mileage figures are from John F. Stover, *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1987), 89, 155, 295, 375.
6. *Ibid.*, 380. Stover lists the number of B&O employees in 1881 as 18,000, and as 25,000 in 1887.
7. *Ibid.*, 379.
8. *Baltimore Sun*, April 27, 2008.
9. *Railway Age* magazine, quoted in the *Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Magazine* (April 1940), 28.
10. After Garrett’s death in 1884, Mary moved into the mansion and, like her father, renovated it several times. At her death in 1915, she bequeathed the mansion (as well as Montebello, her Deer Park cottage, and the remainder of her fortune) to her lifelong friend M. Carey Thomas, who was then president of Bryn Mawr College. In 1923, Thomas gave permission for the Baltimore Museum of Art to hold its opening exhibition at the mansion.
11. Warren Wilmer Brown, “The Baltimore Museum of Art: Its Evolution and Future,” *Art and Archaeology: The Arts through the Ages* (Washington, DC: Archaeological Society of

Washington, 1925), 247. Developers razed the mansion in 1929 to make way for a much-contested high-rise apartment building; it is now a hotel.

12. Ross M. Kimmel and William Offutt Johnson, *Railways to Greenways and Rails to Trails: The Garrett Family of Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Fame Nurtured Public and Private Recreational Opportunities and Started the Practice of Forestry in Maryland* (Annapolis: Maryland Department of Natural Resources, 1991), 1.

13. *Catalogue of Trotting: Thoroughbred and Arabian Stock to be Sold at Auction by Wm. Seemuller & Co., Baltimore, Monday, November 16, 1885*, box 17, Garrett Papers, MS 979, MHS.

14. *Baltimore American*, March 23, 1893.

15. *Baltimore Sun*, September 26, 1884.

16. The B&O exhibit, and Joseph Pangborn's role in it, are described in "History of the Museum," B&O Railroad Museum, www.borail.org/History-of-the-Museum.aspx: "In the course of promotion, Pangborn saved a number of the B&O's wheezing, ancient, obsolete but historic locomotives for an extensive exhibit planned for the World's Columbian Exposition to be held in Chicago in 1892–93. In addition, he designed and built a series of full-sized wooden replicas of the world's pioneering locomotives and mounted an exhibit documenting the continuum of railroad history heretofore unmatched in size, completeness, and significance. For its creative look backward in history, in the midst of a celebration of 'modern' technology, the B&O received the highest honors awarded. This magnificent collection and its exhibit were destined to be part of a new museum of technology proposed by Marshall Field. In the process of planning, however, the Field Museum elected to concentrate on natural history, and the collection was returned to the B&O."

17. Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair* (Chicago: Bancroft, 1893), 549.

18. The cornerstone is on exhibit at the B&O Railroad Museum.

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Essay on Sources

Historical biography, once largely relegated to the sidelines of mainstream historical research, now enjoys well-regarded scholarly recognition and an enthusiastic audience. T. J. Stiles, winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for history for *Custer's Trials: A Life on the Frontier of a New America*—and, in 2009, for *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt*—notes that readers appreciate historical biography because they “know they are getting a good story: the arc of life. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and we can identify with it.”* Lawrence Goldman, director of the University of London’s Institute of Historical Research, adds that historical biography enables the reader not only to learn about a life from the past, but also to understand that person’s place in the history of their era.†

John W. Garrett’s story and his presidency of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, in essence a dual biography, offer the opportunity to closely examine Garrett’s “arc of life”: his privileged childhood, with its bright prospects to achieve wealth and influence; the adult fulfillment—and even the surpassing—of those expectations with professional successes and, at times, failures; and, eventually, the denouement of his career and life and his continuing legacy. Providing the context for Garrett’s life were the epic events of the nineteenth century: great technological breakthroughs; the rise of the railroads; the expansion of commerce from regional mercantile relationships to international corporations; and, perhaps most importantly, the Civil War. All transformed the nation—and John W. Garrett. His story allows us to understand how one man not only experienced his place in historical events, as Goldman explains, but often—as in Garrett’s case—how that person also shaped many of those events. John Garrett and the B&O rode together through each stage of the turbulent and transformative nineteenth century, sometimes defeated, sometimes triumphant, but always determined.

I found the following primary and secondary sources valuable in bringing Garrett’s story and his B&O presidency to life.

*“Interview with National Book Critic Circle Biography finalist T. J. Stiles,” Creative Writing at The New School, March 9, 2016, <http://newschoolwriting.org/interview-nbcc-biography-finalist-t-j-stiles/>.

† Daniel Snowman, “Latest Trends in Historical Biography,” *History Today* 88, no. 11 (November 2014), www.historytoday.com/daniel-snowman/historical-biography/.

Manuscript Collections

The Hays T. Watkins Research Library at the B&O Railroad Museum. The library holds several valuable collections relating to John W. Garrett and his B&O presidency: (1) the Garrett Papers Collection includes correspondence dealing with the day-to-day operations of the railroad during Garrett's presidency, correspondence with company officials, and troop movements and B&O involvement in the Civil War; (2) the *Annual Reports* offer accounts from the president and officials of the company, detailing the operations of each of the company's departments and providing financial and auditing data; and (3) the Board of Directors' minute books present the details of board meetings, the election of officers, and ongoing projects.

The Library of Congress's Manuscript Division. The Garrett Family Papers (1779–1925) offer extensive documentation on the early commercial development of Baltimore and the expanding United States; the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; the Garrett family's enterprises, notably Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated; the Garretts' early involvement with the B&O and their financial support of other railroads; correspondence with notable individuals of the day, including members of Congress, cabinet officers, military officials, railroad presidents, scientists, philanthropists, industrialists, international financiers, and merchants; and personal letters among members of the Garrett family.

The H. Furlong Baldwin Library at the Maryland Historical Society. Manuscript collections of importance include (1) Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated Papers (1818–1864); (2) John W. Garrett Letterbooks, volumes 1 and 2; and the (3) Garrett Papers (1815–1950).

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History Archives. The John W. Garrett Collection (1850–1880) provides information on Garrett's presidency of the railroad, with specific documents relating to machinery and locomotives, correspondence between Garrett and B&O employees, and the B&O during the Civil War.

Special Collections at Bryn Mawr College's Canady Library. Mary Garrett's bequest in 1915 to M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr College, created the Mary Elizabeth Garrett Collection. It includes the bulk of Mary's personal papers, letters, small artifacts, diaries, and travelogues; her memoir; official Garrett family papers, including deeds and legal papers relating to her frequent disagreements with her family about the settlement of her father's estate; expense accounts; gift lists; travel itineraries; telegrams; many personal letters to her mother and other family members; and documents regarding the family estates at Montebello, Mount Vernon Place, and Deer Park.

Johns Hopkins University. Johns Hopkins left few personal or business papers chronicling his life, but there are several important collections held by the university in the *Sheridan Libraries' Archives* that fill in the gaps and pertain to his relationship with Robert Garrett I and John Garrett and with the B&O: the minute books of the university's Board of Trustees, and the Daniel Coit Gilman Papers. The *Alan Mason Chesney Medical Archives* contain the valuable Mary E. Garrett Collection, documenting her many philanthropic and reform activities, as well as papers relating to the Garrett family. The *Evergreen Museum & Library* holds documents, including an extensive photo collection of the Garrett family, that offer a firsthand look at the grand lifestyle of wealthy Baltimoreans such as the Garretts, particularly T. Harrison Garrett and his descendants.

The Garrett-Jacobs Mansion, former home of Robert Garrett II on Mount Vernon Place and now owned by the Engineering Society of Baltimore, provides information relating to

Robert and Mary Frick Garrett and the mansion's many expansions and renovations over the years. Documents regarding the artisans and architects involved with the Evergreen Museum & Library and the Garrett-Jacobs Mansion are well represented in the archives of both mansions.

The Cincinnati Historical Society Library at the Cincinnati Museum Center. The Baltimore and Ohio papers provide valuable supplemental information not found elsewhere on the expansion of the B&O into the Midwest; background on John Work Garrett and his brother, Henry; and the B&O's enticement of Midwesterners to the resort area of Garrett County.

Published Primary Sources

The early history of Baltimore and its commercial links to the West are described in J. Thomas Scharf's *History of Western Maryland, Being a History of Frederick, Montgomery, Carroll, Washington, Allegany, and Garrett Counties from the Earliest Period to the Present Day, Including Biographical Sketches of Their Representative Men*; Scharf's two-volume *History of Baltimore City and County*; and George W. Howard's *Monumental City*. Many foreign visitors stopped by Baltimore in the antebellum and midcentury years, and their experiences are recounted in travelogues and observations about the city, its people, its industries, Mount Vernon Place, slavery, and the Civil War; William Chase compiled and edited such accounts in *Descriptions of Maryland: A Miscellany*. Frances Trollope's travelogue, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, chronicling her 1830 journey through the United States and her visit to Baltimore, provides colorful anecdotal commentary about the city in the antebellum years.

For information on the beginnings of the B&O, William Prescott Smith, longtime B&O master of transportation, published the company's first "official" history in 1853, *A History and Description of the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road*, and John H. B. Latrobe recounted the early challenges the company faced in scaling the Alleghenies in "The B&O Railroad: Personal Reflections; A Lecture Delivered Before the Maryland Institute." For a general account of the B&O, I found Edward Hungerford's centenary two-volume history, *The Story of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad*, to be especially helpful in offering not only background about the company, but also useful anecdotes on Maryland, Baltimore, Robert Garrett I, and John W. Garrett. Ele Bowen's 1855 *Rambles in the Path of the Steam-Horse* provides an understanding of the initial period for the B&O.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine's "Artists' Excursion over the Baltimore and Ohio Rail Road," published in June 1859, gives a lively depiction of a journey on the B&O. "Major" Joseph G. Pangborn added his usual descriptive flourishes to promote the company in *Picturesque B. and O.* and *The New B&O Red Book*. William Keyser, John Garrett's cousin and second vice president at the B&O after the war, provides much good insight into Garrett's personality and management style in *Recollections of a Busy Life*.

For sentiments in Baltimore and Maryland just prior to the Civil War, consult John Pendleton Kennedy, *The Border States: Their Power and Duty in the Present Disordered Condition of the Country*. William E. Bain (ed.), *B&O in the Civil War: From the Papers of William Prescott Smith*, offers insight into the company's unique position in the years leading up to and during the Civil War. Some experiences of Civil War troops, compiled from soldiers' anecdotes, are found in David Mouat, "Three Years in the Twenty-Ninth Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861–1864," held at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

By the second decade of railroading, several trade journals appeared; that number increased over the years. Most helpful for my research were the *Railroad Gazette*, the *American Railroad Journal*, and the *Railroad Record*. Newspapers obligingly covered the B&O and the extended Garrett family in countless articles.

Unpublished Primary Sources

The Garrett Family DNA and Genealogical Research Project. John W. Garrett's story begins with his family's immigration to the United States in 1790 and his father's rise to become a successful Baltimore merchant. In the 1990s, Donald Garrett Dickason, a retired Princeton University administrator, started an ambitious project to trace the Garretts' lineage, in what is identified here as the Garrett Family DNA and Genealogical Research Project. Dickason began his efforts with the Garretts' years in Ireland before they make their perilous Atlantic crossing and continued on to their life in Pennsylvania, Robert Garrett I's move to Baltimore, and the establishment of Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated. Dickason, who passed away in 2006, probed into the records, oral histories, and DNA evidence of his ancestors and discovered valuable information and anecdotes that added a personal perspective on the Garretts not readily available through other sources.

Mary Elizabeth Garrett Memoir. Later in life, possibly when in her 50s, Mary penned a short memoir. It is most helpful in piecing together her early childhood, as well as her relationship with her father and her extended family. Of particular importance are her recollections of the Civil War period, her father's role in the conflict, her later involvement with the B&O as her "Papa's secretary," and her behind-the-scenes machinations at the B&O after his death. Many of the events and impressions she describes are corroborated in other sources.

Unpublished Secondary Source

William Bruce Catton's 1959 Northwestern University doctoral dissertation, "John W. Garrett of the Baltimore & Ohio: A Study in Seaport and Railroad Competition, 1820–1874," continues to hold an esteemed place in the history of the B&O and its major competitors in the company's first half century.

Published Secondary Sources

Two works provide background specifically on the Garrett family. Harold A. Williams's *Robert Garrett & Sons, Incorporated: Origin and Development, 1840–1965*, offers an overview of the founding of the family firm and details about Robert Garrett I and his sons, John W. Garrett and Henry Garrett. Kathleen Waters Sander's 2008 *Mary Elizabeth Garrett: Society and Philanthropy in the Gilded Age* examines John Garrett's relationship with his daughter, as well as her trailblazing philanthropy and reform activism.

Baltimore's important and intriguing nineteenth-century history is well represented in scholarly research. Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes, and Linda Zeidman's anthology of Baltimore from the nineteenth century through the late twentieth century, *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History*, provides two social histories relevant to the Garretts: "Camden

Yards and the Strike of 1877” and “Evergreen House and the Garrett Family: A Railroad Fortune.” No chronicle of Baltimore would be complete without Francis F. Beirne’s *The Amiable Baltimoreans*, with its quaint mix of anecdotes, facts, oral histories, and appealing narrative describing Baltimore’s first two centuries. Eric Holcomb’s *The City as Suburb: A History of Northeast Baltimore since 1660* contributes much to our understanding of Garrett’s and Hopkins’s country estates and their hopes to build the new Johns Hopkins University in that region. Robert Garrett I and his two sons are well represented in basic encyclopedic information, such as Brantz Mayer’s *Baltimore Past and Present, with Biographical Sketches of Its Respectable Men* and the two-volume *Baltimore: Its History and Its People*, edited by Clayton Coleman Hall. Editor Marjorie Luckett, in turn, fills in perspectives on the other 51 percent of Baltimore’s elite class by profiling Baltimore’s gracious ladies in *Maryland Women*.

For Baltimore in the Civil War era, I found the following especially helpful in understanding Baltimore’s dual alliances and secessionist activities during the war: Scott Sumpter Sheads and Daniel Carroll Toomey’s *Baltimore during the Civil War*; Robert I. Cottom Jr. and Mary Ellen Hayward’s *Maryland in the Civil War: A House Divided*; editor Charles W. Mitchell’s *Maryland Voices of the Civil War*; and Robert J. Brugger’s *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634–1980*. Robert Brugger’s *The Maryland Club: A History of Food and Friendship, 1857–1997* offers insight into Baltimore’s secessionist activities, including Henry Garrett’s Southern sympathies; and George M. Frederickson’s *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* helped explain the irrational nature of the Civil War and the eagerness with which upper-class young men, such as Robert Garrett II, succumbed to the seduction of war, breaking with parental authority and traditional expectations.

Writers and historians have long been intrigued by the colorful, complex history of the country’s first chartered railroad, the B&O. Some of the most important secondary sources examining the company’s history and development have been made by Baltimoreans: Herbert H. Harwood Jr. examines the B&O from its modest start, in his *Impossible Challenge II: The Odyssean Saga of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad from Baltimore to Washington and Harpers Ferry from 1828 to 1994*, to its brilliant finale, in his *Royal Blue Line: The Classic B&O Train between Washington and New York*. Courtney B. Wilson’s *Mt. Clare: The Birthplace of American Railroad*, David Shackelford’s *A Journey from Roads to Rails: The Baltimore & Frederick Turnpike, the B&O Railroad, and Ellicotts Mills, Maryland, 1800–1860*, and James D. Dilt’s *The Great Road: The Building of the Baltimore and Ohio, the Nation’s First Railroad, 1828–1853* examine the company’s important history and place in American railroading.

John F. Stover, author of several books on railroading, in 1987 published *History of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad*, considered one of the most complete and well-regarded histories of the company from its founding through the 1980s. The book is replete with detailed appendices and maps and has withstood the test of time as being a reliable source for the financial and management history of the B&O. William Bruce Catton’s “How Rails Saved a Seaport” investigates the importance of the B&O to Baltimore’s commercial vitality. John Moody’s *The Railroad Builders: A Chronicle of the Welding of the States* offers a critical perspective on John Work Garrett’s management of the B&O that counterbalances contemporary articles published during Garrett’s lifetime. Baltimore author Paul Winchester’s *Graphic Sketches of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad* provides helpful, and at times amusing, insights into the early years of the company and Garrett’s presidency of it.

Perhaps the most useful research on Garrett's competition with the Pennsylvania Railroad is Albert J. Churella's impressive *Building an Empire, 1846–1917* (vol. 1 of *The Pennsylvania Railroad*), with its in-depth look at the vision, success, and aggressiveness of J. Edgar Thomson and his successor, Thomas Scott, as well as the political machinations of Simon Cameron. James A. Ward's *J. Edgar Thomson: Master of the Pennsylvania* adds dimension to the Garrett-Thomson rivalry. Garrett's relationships and competition with other railroad presidents are examined in T. J. Stiles's *The First Tycoon: The Epic Life of Cornelius Vanderbilt*, Jean Strouse's *Morgan: American Financier*, and Maury Klein's *The Life and Legend of Jay Gould*. Financier and philanthropist George Peabody's lifelong friendship and business relationship with two generations of Garretts and Peabody's successor, Junius Morgan, are important in understanding the early history of Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated and, later, John Garrett's management of the B&O. Franklin Parker's *George Peabody: A Biography* is helpful in understanding their personal and business relationships, as are *The Founder's Letters*, published by the Peabody Institute, and Elizabeth Schaaf's "George Peabody: His Life and Legacy, 1795–1869."

Several studies provide excellent background information on the railroads' rise and their importance to national economic development during the nineteenth century: Maury Klein's *Unfinished Business: The Railroad in American Life* and his *The Flowering of the Third America: The Making of an Organized Society, 1850–1920*; Alfred Chandler Jr.'s *The Railroads: The Nation's First Big Business*; John F. Stover's *American Railroads*; and F. W. Stevens's *The Beginnings of the New York Central Railroad*. Alfred D. Chandler Jr.'s widely respected *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* explores the development of railroad management, including the B&O's early accounting practices, within the broader context of emerging American corporations in the nineteenth century. For background on specific B&O accounting methods, see Joel E. Thomson, "Railroad Investing and the Importance of Financial Accounting Information in 1880s America"; Peter Kocan, "Peculiarities of Railroad Accounting"; and William D. Samson and Gary John Previts, "Reporting for Success: The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and Management Information, 1827–1856," and their "Exploring the Contents of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Annual Report, 1827–1856."

The B&O's important role in the Civil War forms the exclusive focus for two books: Festus P. Summer's 1939 *The Baltimore and Ohio in the Civil War* and, more recently, Daniel Carroll Toomey's 2013 *The War Came by Train: The Baltimore & Ohio Railroad during the Civil War*, the complementary book to the B&O Railroad Museum's exhibit of the same name.

An abundance of important works offer more-comprehensive explanations of the part railroads played in the Civil War. Most railroad and Civil War historians agree that Northern railroads, far superior to those in the South, were integral to the Union's victory. Several studies augment and add context to the information revealed in primary documents about railroads in general and the B&O's role in the war and were useful to my book: George Edgar Turner, *Victory Rode the Rails: The Strategic Place of the Railroads in the Civil War*; John E. Clark, *Railroads in the Civil War: The Impact of Management on Victory and Defeat*; Robert C. Black III, *The Railroads of the Confederacy*; Roger Pickenpugh, *Rescue by Rail: Troop Transfer and the Civil War in the West, 1863*, and his *Captives in Blue: The Civil War Prisons of the Confederacy* (for B&O employees captured during the war); William G. Thomas, *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America*; Robert V. Bruce, *Lincoln and the Tools of War*; Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern*

Warfare; Robert R. Hodges, *American Civil War Railroad Tactics*; and Thomas Weber, *The Northern Railroads in the Civil War, 1861–1865*. Christopher R. Gabel, in *Railroad Generalship: Foundations of Civil War Strategy*, argues that in the last two years of the war, the railroads' role went far beyond logistics and supply. Military leaders began planning their strategies and campaigns around the railroads. Commanders, particularly General William Tecumseh Sherman, deployed the railroads for his brilliant and merciless Atlanta Campaign—the March to the Sea—that “doomed the Confederacy to defeat.”*

For the politicians and military officers with whom Garrett communicated during the Civil War, the following sources provide context: Michael Korda, *Clouds of Glory: The Life and Legend of Robert E. Lee*; James Robertson, *The Untold Civil War: Exploring the Human Side of War*; Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, and his *Embattled Rebel: Jefferson Davis as Commander in Chief*; and Joan Cashin, *First Lady of the Confederacy: Varina Davis's Civil War*.

John Garrett was pivotal in bringing together George Peabody and Johns Hopkins to discuss the disposition of Hopkins's wealth and the formation of Johns Hopkins University and the Johns Hopkins Hospital, and several sources examine the founding of these institutions. The history of the country's first graduate-level research university and its equally distinctive medical school benefits from similarly rich scholarship. Laurence R. Veysey's *The Emergence of the American University* and Francesco Cordasco's *The Shaping of American Graduate Education: Daniel Coit Gilman and the Protean Ph.D.* offer perspectives on the unique concept of postgraduate education, and Hugh Hawkins's *Pioneer: A History of the Johns Hopkins University, 1874–1889* adds descriptions of the Garretts' early involvement with the university. Paul Starr's Pulitzer- and Bancroft-prizewinning *The Social Transformation of American Medicine* is most helpful in explaining the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine's role as an early prototype of modern American medical care. Abner McGhee Harvey and colleagues, in the two-volume *A Model of Its Kind*, consisting of *A Centennial History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins* and the companion *A Pictorial History of Medicine at Johns Hopkins*, provide an overview of the development of the Johns Hopkins Hospital in relation to the university and the medical school. For a more personal look at Johns Hopkins, Helen Hopkins Thom published *Johns Hopkins: A Silhouette* about her great-uncle.

For the development of Western Maryland tourism and the construction of B&O hotels and stations, see Stephen Schlosnagle and the Garrett County Centennial Committee, *Garrett County: A History of Maryland's Tableland*; Mary I. Love's *Once Upon a Mountaintop: The Improbable History of Mt. Lake Park, MD*; and Carlos P. Avery, *E. Francis Baldwin, Architect: The B&O, Baltimore, and Beyond*.

* Christopher R. Gabel, *Railroad Generalship: Foundations of Civil War Strategy* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1997), 23

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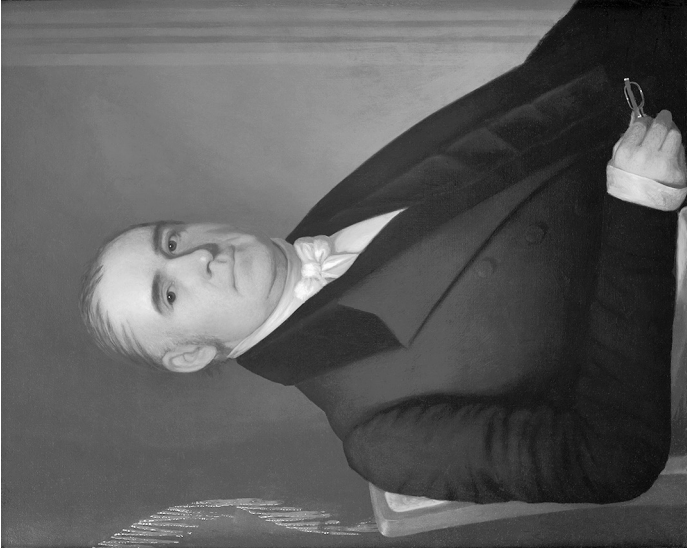


Figure 1. Arriving in Baltimore in 1801 as a poor Irish immigrant, John Garrett's father, Robert, rose to become a leader in the city's commerce and an early proponent and financial backer of the B&O and other railroads in the antebellum years. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 2. Elizabeth Stouffer Garrett, John Garrett's "revered mother," taught her son the values of discipline, loyalty, and patriotism. When not running her boisterous household, Elizabeth was active in Baltimore charities. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 3. Rachel Harrison, a daughter of a successful Baltimore merchant family and one of Baltimore's "gracious ladies," married John Garrett in 1846, putting an end to his "lady crazy days." She provided emotional ballast for her beleaguered husband during the Civil War and the difficult years that followed. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.

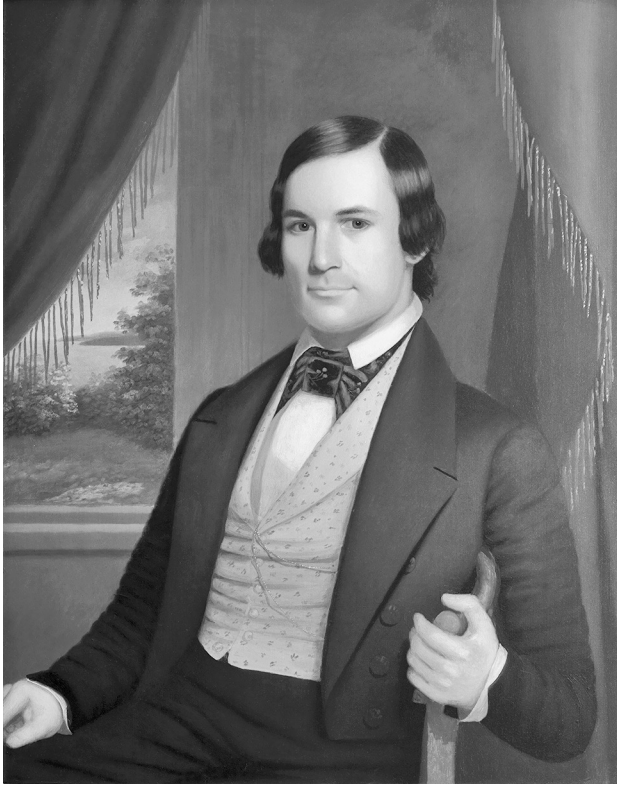


Figure 4. At age 25, John Garrett was described as handsome, impressive, and vigorous. Having worked successfully in the family firm for seven years, he had outgrown his youthful shyness and displayed confidence and a touch of cockiness. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 5. Elizabeth Barbara Garrett, John and Henry Garrett's beloved little sister Lizzie, endured affectionate teasing by her brothers in the close and companionable Garrett household. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 6. Henry Garrett, the family's bachelor and bon vivant, became a respected Baltimore businessman as the head of Robert Garrett and Sons, Incorporated, a financial advisor to President James Buchanan, a trusted confidante of his brother John—and a vocal secessionist and Southern sympathizer. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 7. John Garrett hoped his heir apparent, Robert II, would create a B&O dynasty, but his oldest son's temperament and personality did not fit with the fierce competition in railroading. "He had too much given to him and really earned few of the several advances presented to him." Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 8. John Garrett's younger son, T. Harrison Garrett, a collector of rare books and coins, headed the firm of Robert Garrett and Sons until his untimely death. He and his wife Alice had three sons, John Work II, Robert III, and Horatio. Harrison's opulent Gilded Age home, the current Evergreen Museum & Library, is now owned by Johns Hopkins University and is open to the public. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.



Figure 9. As a young woman, John Garrett's daughter, Mary Elizabeth, became "Papa's secretary," accompanying him on railroad business. "If the boys were only like Mary, what a satisfaction that would be for me," Garrett once commented. Mary became one of the country's most renowned philanthropists and reformers. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.

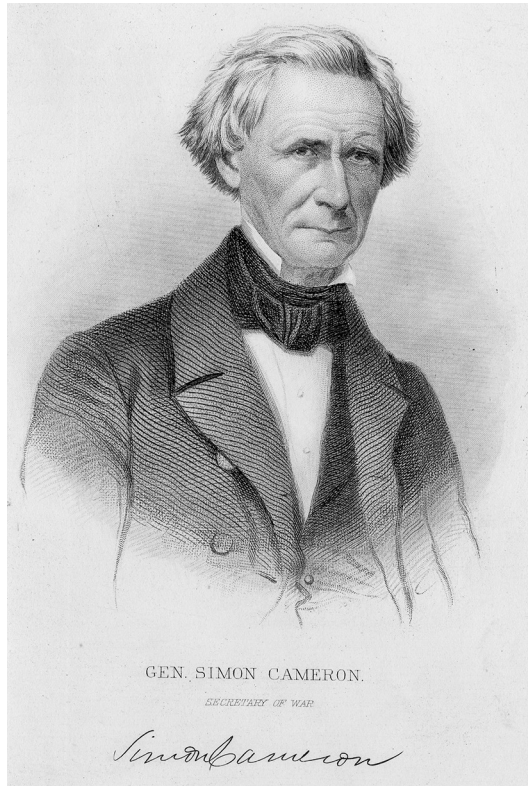


Figure 10. President Lincoln appointed Simon Cameron, a powerful senator, Washington insider, and advocate of the B&O's primary rival, the Pennsylvania Railroad, as the first secretary of war. Garrett felt that Cameron provided little assistance during the Confederates' many attacks on the B&O and, after the war, tried to thwart the B&O's expansion plans. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

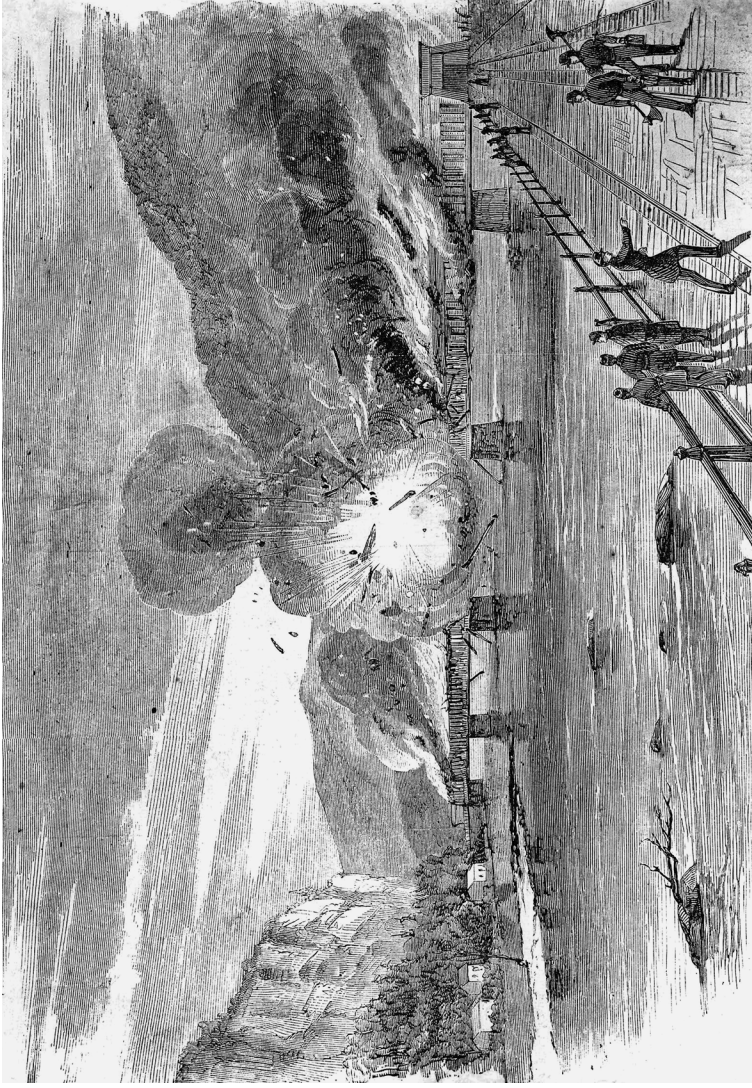


Figure 11. The B&O's vulnerable route system, running through Union Maryland and Confederate Virginia, marked it as the war's "first front" — an early target for Southern aggression. Within two months of the start of the war, Confederates destroyed the critical B&O bridge over the Potomac River at Harpers Ferry in June 1861, the first of many such attacks on the B&O. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

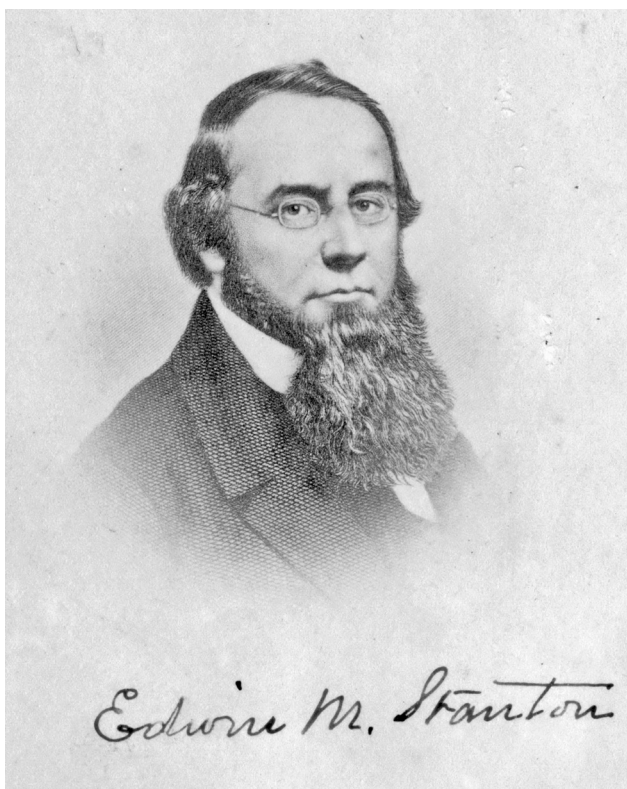


Figure 12. Much to Garrett's relief, his longtime friend Edwin M. Stanton replaced Cameron as secretary of war in 1862. Garrett and Stanton communicated daily during the war. In September 1863, Stanton worked closely with Garrett to quickly transport 25,000 men and their equipment west after General William Rosecrans's defeat at Chickamauga. The covert operation gained fame as the "great troop movement," proved the reliability of railroads in war, and helped the Union maintain a stronghold in the Western Theater. Courtesy of the Daniel Carroll Toomey Collection.

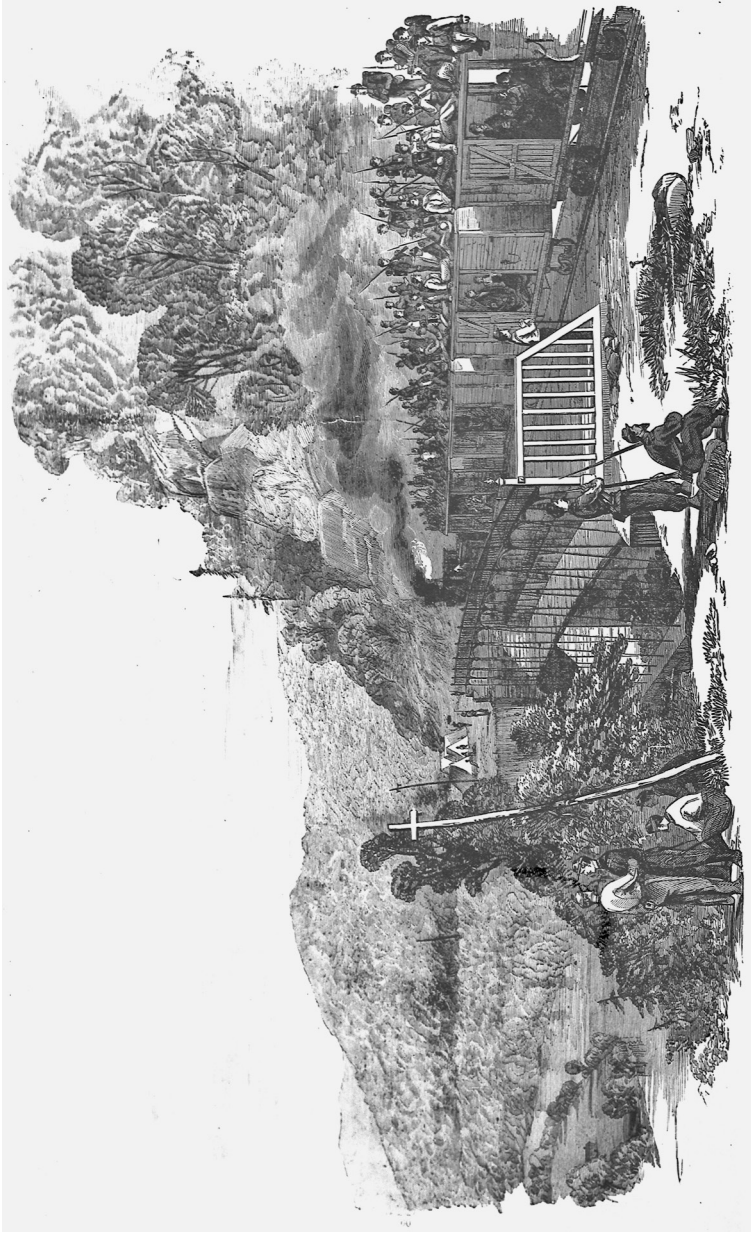


Figure 13. Early in the war Garrett, casting off suspicions of Confederate sympathies, made the B&O available for troop and supply movements to critical battles. Here, a troop train, similar to those used in the 700-car convoy of the great troop movement, crosses the Tray Run Viaduct in what is now West Virginia. President Lincoln commended the B&O as “the right arm of the federal government” for its critical role in the ultimate Union victory. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

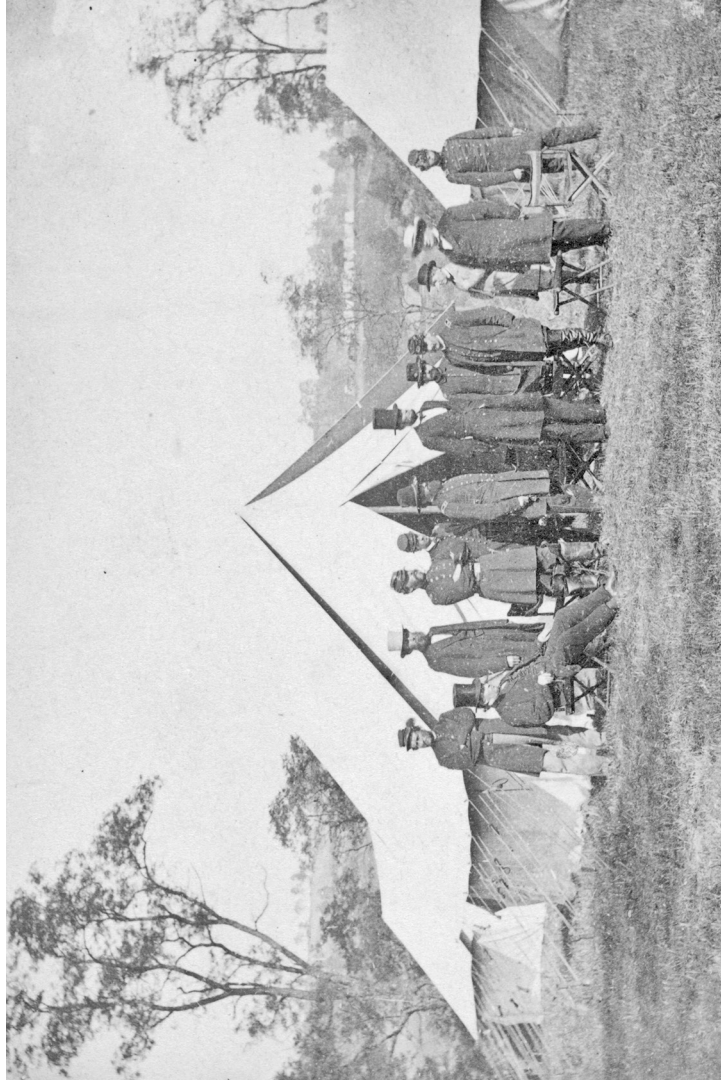


Figure 14. Shortly after the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862—the bloodiest single day of the war—President Lincoln asked Garrett to accompany him to the battlefield, where he reviewed the troops of the Army of the Potomac and met with its commander, General George McClellan, who had failed to pursue the retreat of Robert E. Lee's Confederates. After the war, Garrett (*second from right*) "reconstructed" this photograph to remove everyone from the image except himself, Lincoln, and McClellan, more than likely to enhance his public reputation as a member of Lincoln's inner circle. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

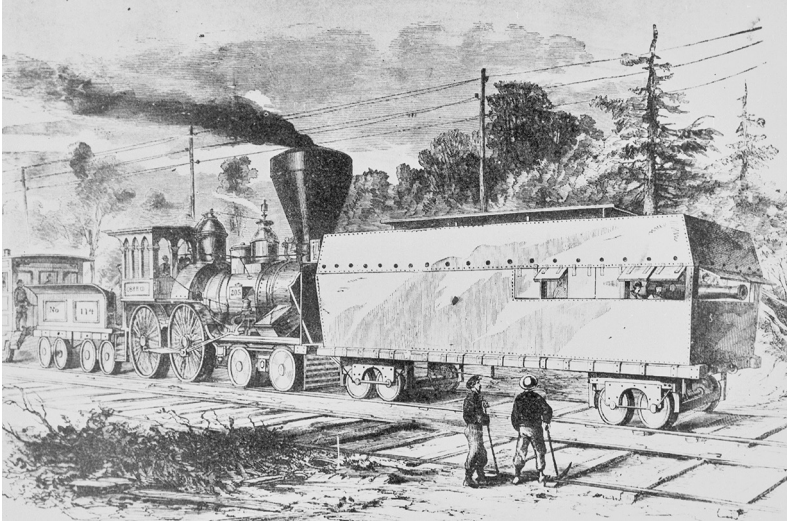


Figure 15. In 1863, for the first time in what was then two years of war, B&O cars and crews were not totally defenseless. Early in that year, Garrett ordered workers at the Mount Clare Shops to construct fortified iron cars, which had been designed by a young first lieutenant, John Rodgers Meigs, son of Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. Borrowing from the US Navy's similar design for ironclads, the armored rolling artillery cars proved invaluable in a surprise attack on Lee's retreat from Gettysburg. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

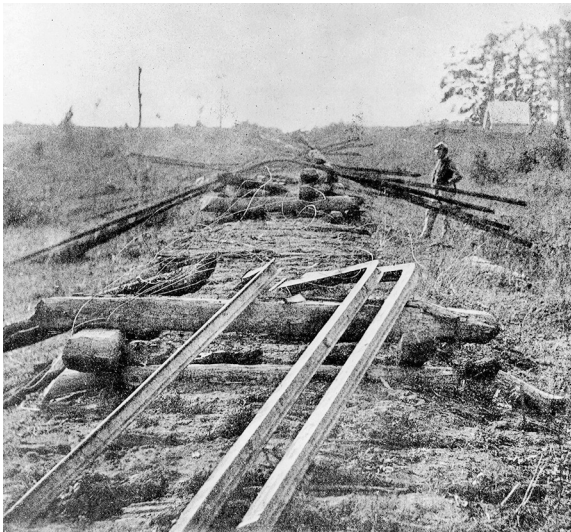


Figure 16. The Confederates attacked the B&O 143 times during the war, destroying equipment, bridges, telegraph lines, and miles of tracks. With his crews working night and day, Garrett quickly had the damage repaired and made sure that the B&O's important supply lines stayed open. Scenes like this one, with destroyed tracks lying amid a tangle of downed telegraph wires, represented the all-too-familiar calling card of the Army of Northern Virginia as it laid waste to the entire rail network in southern Pennsylvania during the Gettysburg Campaign. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 17. Although the western counties of Virginia became the Union state of West Virginia in 1863, Confederate attacks on the B&O continued in the new state. Here, a burned B&O passenger train is left immobilized near Kearneysville, West Virginia, on October 14, 1864. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 18. At the end of the war, John Garrett emerged seemingly strong and healthy. In the years ahead, he would face even greater challenges to keep the B&O running. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

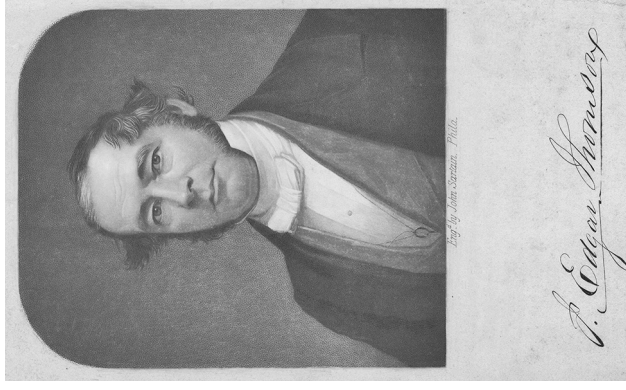


Figure 19. After the war, Garrett faced many new competitors—Commodore Vanderbilt, Jay Gould, and Andrew Carnegie, among others. His long-standing rivalry with the Pennsylvania Railroad did not abate, but instead intensified. Since it was not hindered by wartime damages and obligations, as the B&O had been, the Pennsylvania's president, J. Edgar Thomson (*right*), and its vice president, Thomas Scott (*left*), stayed one step ahead of Garrett in reaching both the emerging markets of Chicago and New York and the war-ravaged South. Courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (for Thomson) and the Daniel Carroll Toomey Collection (for Scott).

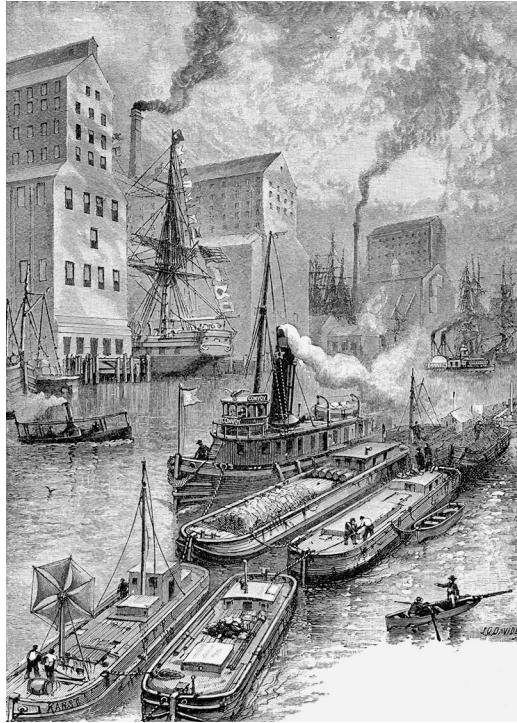


Figure 20. Rebuilding Baltimore's postwar economy became one of Garrett's main objectives. He expanded Locust Point, on Baltimore's Inner Harbor, to become the city's primary transportation hub. The complex included gigantic grain elevators facing the harbor (*top*), and dozens of railroad tracks for cars bringing valuable commodities to be exported, especially coal (*bottom*). The B&O's Baltimore–Bremen line brought nearly a half million immigrants to the United States through Locust Point in the last decades of the nineteenth century; many stayed in Baltimore, while others took B&O trains to points farther west. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

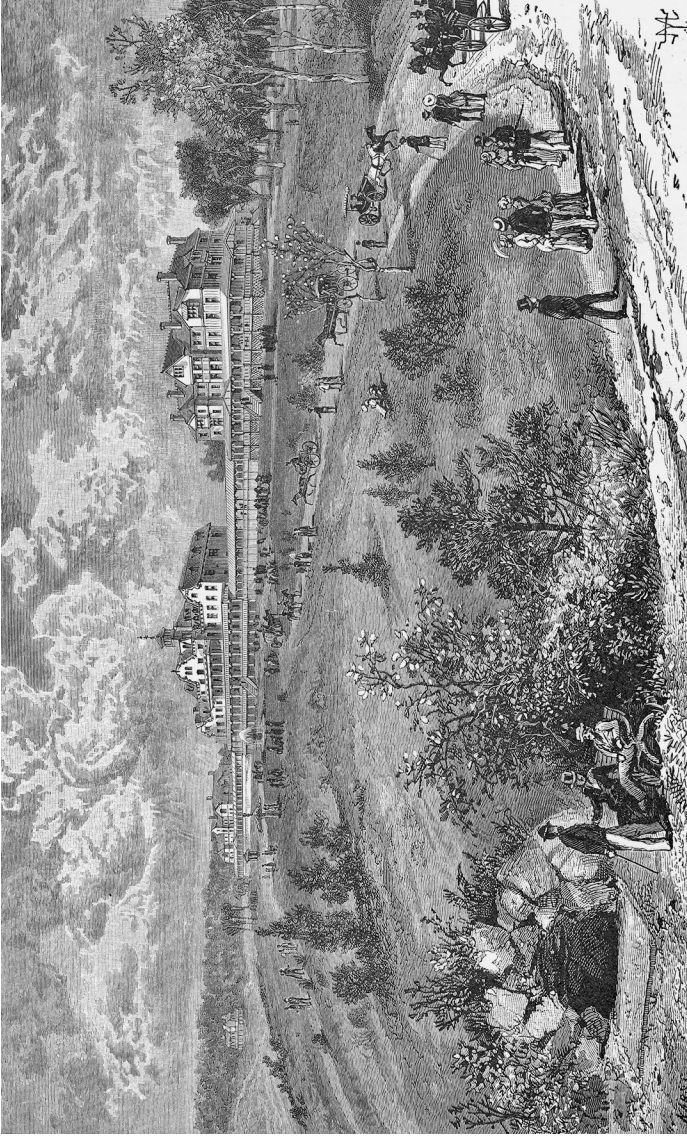


Figure 21. After the war, Garrett developed tourism in the “delightful and salubrious” mountains of Western Maryland. On July 4, 1872, the B&O broke ground for the Deer Park Hotel, pictured here. This luxurious building and its grounds featured electric lights, elevators, swimming pools, Turkish baths, bowling alleys, golf courses, and the perennial Victorian favorites, tennis and croquet. A year later, Garrett started construction on the similarly opulent Oakland Hotel, a mile away. Garrett’s successful tourism ventures brought much commerce to the region, which eventually was named Garrett County. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

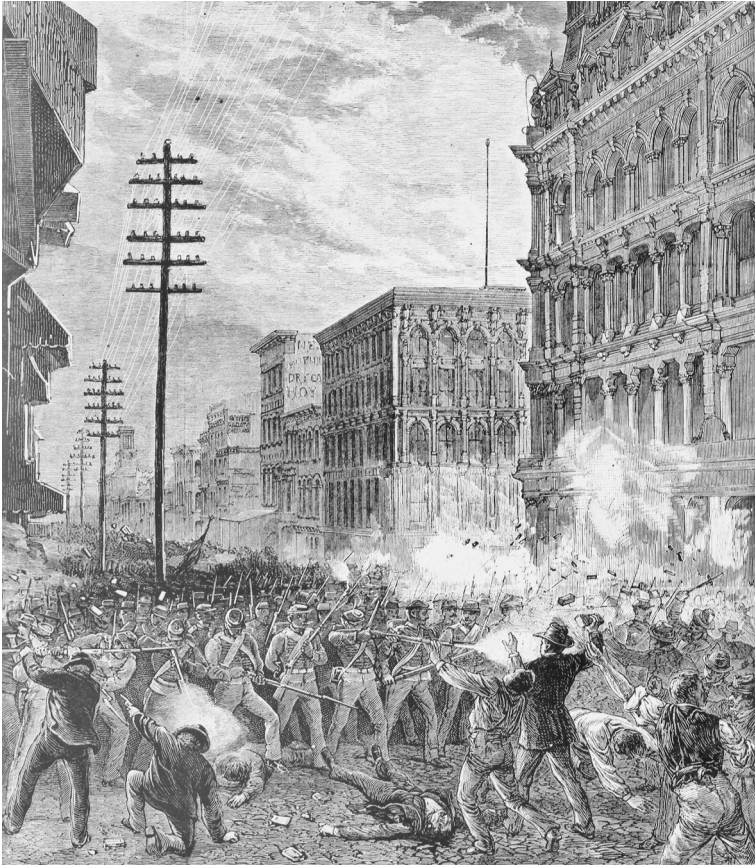


Figure 22. Garrett faced one of his greatest postwar challenges with the violent labor strike of 1877, which was precipitated when he slashed B&O workers' pay in two back-to-back wage cuts. The strike started on B&O lines in Martinsburg and quickly spread nationwide to other sectors of the economy. Here, the Fifth and Sixth Regiments of the Maryland National Guard try to quell the riot in Baltimore after being called out by Governor John Carroll. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 23. Garrett commissioned E. Francis Baldwin, the architect for several B&O hotels and stations, to design the new B&O headquarters. When completed in 1882, the five-story granite and brick building gained widespread fame and stood as Baltimore's tallest, most modern building, featuring hydraulic elevators and high-ceilinged offices. "The effect of the building is massive," the *American Architect and Building News* pronounced, and "the execution of the work of the exterior is apparently faultless." Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 24. At the time of John W. Garrett's death, the B&O's Roundhouse, designed by Baldwin, was nearing completion. It ranked as the largest "round" building in the world at the time—although it actually features twenty-two sides. The small trapezoidal building in the front is the Mount Clare Depot, built in 1851 to replace a wooden railroad station, the first in the Western Hemisphere. The long building with the tower is the Roundhouse Annex, constructed immediately after the completion of the Roundhouse in 1884, containing offices, the company's print shop, a library, and a temporary morgue for workers killed on the job. The complex now houses the B&O Railroad Museum, its archives, and its offices. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.



Figure 25. Recognizing the B&O's unique place in railroading history, in 1880, Garrett hired "Major" Joseph G. Pangborn to create a public relations program for the company. Aside from writing colorful promotional books and collecting early B&O locomotives, Pangborn commissioned elegant posters to advertise B&O routes. Courtesy of the B&O Railroad Museum.

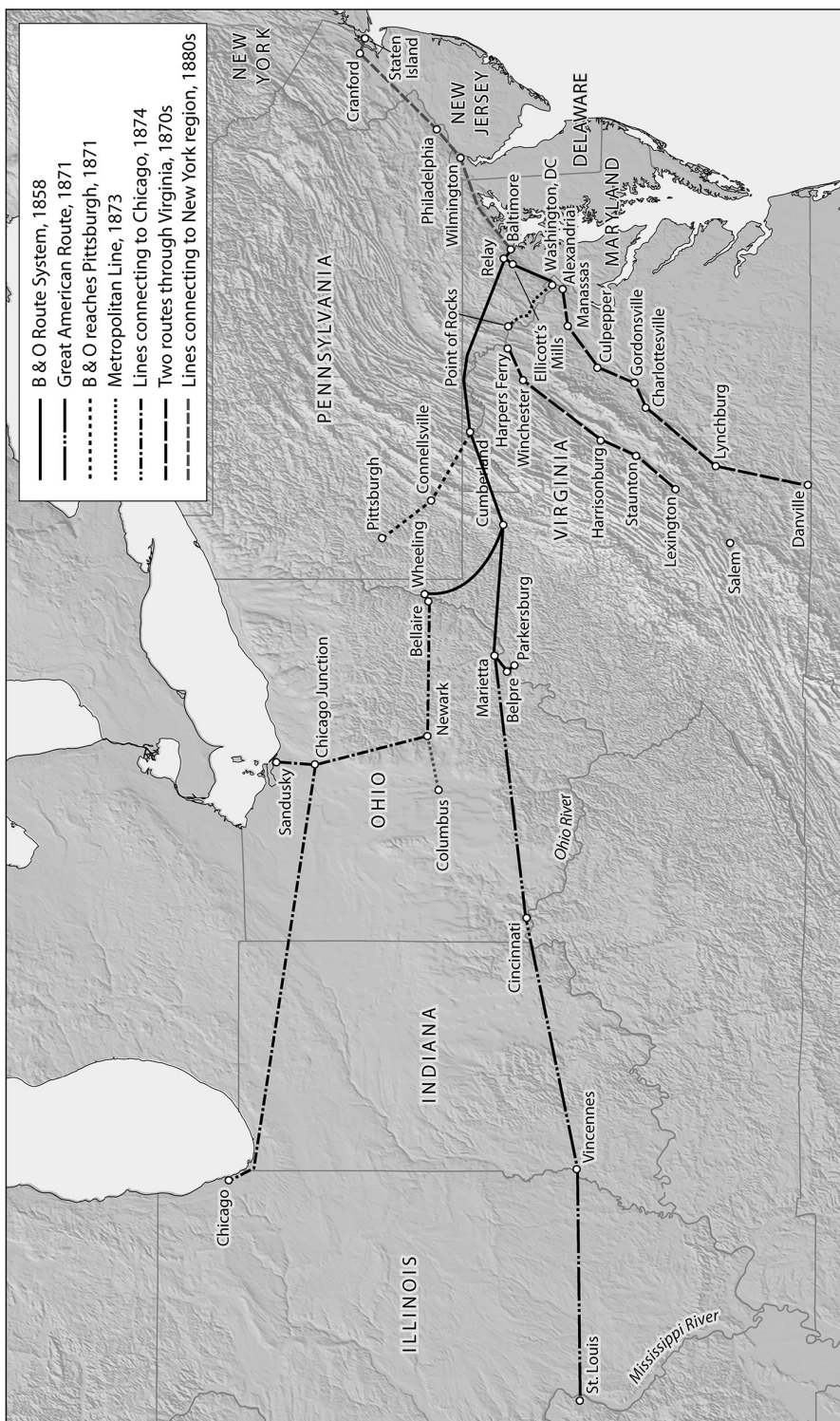


Figure 26. In 1858, when John Garrett took over the presidency of the railroad, B&O-owned tracks reached Washington, DC, and Wheeling and Parkersburg (on the Ohio River). During the twenty-six years of his presidency, Garrett expanded the company to the west, the south, and the northeast, largely by means of mergers, leasing agreements and various arrangements with connecting lines, or the construction of new B&O tracks to fill in the gaps to reach important commercial markets. The B&O and its affiliated lines reached Pittsburgh in 1871, as well as Newark, Ohio, where the line headed north and then west to reach Chicago in 1874. Garrett solidified connections for the Great American Route through Cincinnati to St. Louis, and built tracks from Washington, DC, to Point of Rocks, Maryland, in 1873. He initiated two routes through Virginia: in the Piedmont from Alexandria to Danville, and from Harpers Ferry up the Shenandoah Valley. By the time of his death in 1884, the B&O had liquidated the Danville project and the route up the valley was tenuously nearing Lexington but was blocked by competitors from reaching Garrett's goal of Salem. Garrett also was patching together agreements with other lines to get to Staten Island in New York Harbor. Cartography courtesy of Bill Nelson.



Figure 27. In the last years of his life, Garrett's health acutely diminished. Rachel had stood by him for thirty-seven years of marriage. "I have never seen in all my life an instance where man and wife were more completely a unit," the family's minister eulogized at Rachel's funeral in November 1883. Garrett, brokenhearted over his wife's death, died ten months later. Courtesy of the Collection of the Evergreen House Foundation, Evergreen Museum & Library, Johns Hopkins University.